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**HOW TO MAKE
THE BEST OF LIFE**

ARNOLD BENNETT

By ARNOLD BENNETT

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MR. PROHACK	THE BOOK OF CARLOTTA
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THE PRETTY LADY	A GREAT MAN
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THINGS THAT HAVE INTERESTED ME	
THINGS THAT HAVE INTERESTED MR. <i>Second Series</i>	

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BY
ARNOLD BENNETT

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HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF LIFE. II

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**HOW TO MAKE
THE BEST OF LIFE**

HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF LIFE

I

TEMPERAMENT AND HABITS

TO make the best of life it is absolutely necessary to satisfy, without over-indulging, your temperament. This is the most important thing of all. Reason is excellent, reason is admirable; but it is not, and should not be, the sole guide of life; and those wondrous persons who invariably act according to the dictates of reason are usually enormous bores, disagreeable, priggish, and without imagination. Fortunately there are very few of them.

To say that man is a reasoning animal is a poetical extravagance. Man is sometimes a reasoning animal. But he is a temperamental animal all the time. He is born with a certain temperament; it never stops influencing him; it is like the influence of the wind or the tide on a

ship, except that its influence is always, always in the same direction. No man can change his temperament, and scarcely any man succeeds in modifying it in the slightest degree. When you are born you are done for, in the matter of temperament. The colour of your eyes may alter, generally does; but your temperament won't. It will show itself in your last breath. This may be regrettable, but it is so, and the fact should be faced. Arrange your existence, or let others arrange it for you, without fully consulting your temperament, and there will be trouble. Make an enemy of your temperament, and you will make the worst of life. The temperament is bound to win, and you will array the forces of reason against it in vain. In such combats reason is a bow-and-arrow soldier and temperament is a tank. Therefore come to terms with your temperament, and however young you are, and however wise and bald and ponderous your advisers, let no one set you permanently on a path to which it objects.

By temperament I mean the general bent and character of a man's vitality. Some men are born to command, others—and by far the greater number—to obey. Some men love responsibility; the vast majority of us hate it; in the late war there

were at least five millions of armed Britons who loathed responsibility like the pest, but that was a temporary phenomenon. Some men are passionate; more are fishes. Some men must have change, of place, of action, of aim; others desire only to do the same thing at the same time every day—the season ticket-holders of life. Some men prefer to work alone, others prefer to be surrounded by their fellows who are doing just what they themselves are doing. Some men prefer not to work at all. But beware of saying that a man is temperamentally idle. It may happen that a man is idle for years and then bursts into a prolonged fever of activity; and this may be due to a change in his bodily condition or to the sudden victory of a temperament that had been thwarted. Some men are ambitious; the majority are not. And a good thing, too! For a world full of Napoleons would soon be a world full of corpses and one Napoleon, who would have no subjects except subjects for dissection.

It is needless to give further examples of different temperaments. I have suggested some of the most striking contrasts in them. There are hundreds more, and each reader can find his own. Every temperament is a paramount fact, exceeding and surpassing reason. Must a man, then,

yield himself completely to his temperament? Certainly he must not. Although no lasting happiness can be attained if the temperament is utterly thwarted, on the other hand a total surrender to temperament is likely to result in both individual and general unhappiness. Perhaps in a few cases the temperament is wholly good; perhaps in a few it is wholly evil. But most temperaments have in them the seeds of both good and evil.

Temperaments have to be checked, like parliamentary majorities and other tyrants. You cannot overthrow them at will, but you can keep them in order, and the business of the reasoning faculty is to keep them in order. A man's temperament may urge him to appropriate other people's property without leave and without paying for it. He is called a thief if he is poor, and she is called a kleptomaniac if she is rich. The consequences of not putting a curb on such a temperament will be evil all round, but happily society takes this temperament in hand, and, while the temperament is never thereby altered, the natural results of it are in a measure averted. The temperament which urges its possessor always to give is less fortunate; society will not interfere with it, and indeed it is encouraged in excess on all sides and works

much harm. But as a rule the evil possibilities of a temperament are perceived with some clearness by its possessor and with more clearness by his friends; and reason has a fair chance of avoiding disastrous and absolute defeat in the battle with its powerful adversary.

The answer to the question: "How far must a temperament be checked?" is: "You have got to judge for yourself."

All one may safely say is that a temperament cannot be advantageously scotched and it cannot advantageously be given full liberty. Between these two extremes common sense must draw a line. Vague and difficult advice, you say! Yes! But life itself is vague and difficult.



It is in the choice of a career that the first great reckoning with temperament must occur. Of this crisis in life two things are to be said. It is of tremendous, overwhelming importance; and the difficulty of it can scarcely be exaggerated. Frightful and tragic mistakes are made; yet the marvel is not that the mistakes are so numerous, but that they are so few. Neither the parent nor the youth is properly qualified to give a decision. Parents have a wonderful way of for-

getting how they felt when they were young. Parents have also a wonderful way of repeating the errors which their elders committed in regard to themselves. Parents, like other human beings, habitually mistake their own preferences and desires for the voice of omniscient wisdom. Parents seldom study the psychology of their children. Parents are apt to hold the singular belief that they have conferred a benefit on their children by bringing them into the world, and that therefore their children owe them all sorts of heavy debts, including blind obedience. It is no uncommon sight to see a parent who has made a horrid mess of his own life assuming quite blandly the *rôle* of an autocratic Solomon to his son.

On the other hand, if parents know little of youths, youths often know no more of themselves. Their temperaments may not be even half developed at the moment of the choice, for not infrequently, since the method of education may depend on the career chosen, the choice must be made at an extremely early age. Again, the youth may accept a passing caprice for a permanent temperamental bent. The chances are ten to one that he is attracted by externals and inessentials. Almost certainly the youth, like the parent, will be influenced by circumstances which

facilitate the apprenticeship to a career, regardless of the fact that in life the early difficulties are trifles compared with the later. The business of youth is to conquer difficulties; the business of age is to avoid them. To shirk responsibilities in youth is to create difficulties for age. It is a form of cowardice. And whereas apprenticeship lasts only a few years, a baulked temperament irritates day and night till the grave.

"I am a lawyer," says the parent. "I have a good practice. You will succeed to it. It is ready made for you. What in the name of common sense is all this silly talk about wanting to be an engineer? I never heard such rubbish."

Reason thinks it has vanquished temperament, but temperament is a vindictive and satanic creature. It never really yields, never forgives. It will have its revenge, assuredly on the youth, possibly on both the youth and the parent.

At the root of many blunders in the choice of a career is the almost universal assumption that the youth is ambitious. I have already said that the majority are not, but the statement needs some explanation. Nearly all decent youths think they are ambitious, and they are encouraged in this notion by parents, who are unable to believe that the progeny which *they* have begotten and

conceived is not remarkable. And undoubtedly nearly all decent youths would like to be brilliantly successful, to stand out from their fellows, to be rich and powerful, to command luxuries.

But there is a difference between this vague longing, which comes and goes, and which every one of us has felt, and the continuous, urgent, acute desire to get on. He who wishes the end wishes the means to the end. The means to the realisation of ambition are initiative, enterprise, resource, tireless energy, invincible optimism, and egotism. How many individuals genuinely want to make the sacrifices and to expend the energy required for the realisation of ambition? Exceedingly few. Ambition is like seven devils with whips thrashing you forward. It brings happiness only in so far as it satisfies a temperamental instinct. Those who are ambitious, and successfully so, are not happier than those who satisfy their temperaments in any other way.

And yet parents will persuade youths, and youths will persuade themselves, to launch upon difficult and hazardous careers demanding qualities which the said youths obviously do not possess—simply because of the delusion that to be ambitious is necessarily laudable! Too often a parent who himself has not been successfully am-

bitious will try, for egotistic reasons, to realise an ambition vicariously through his son, regardless of the son's temperament.

"I have failed. You must succeed."

The parent is applauded, and unquestionably there is good in the idea; nevertheless, the parent may be committing a crime against the son.

I agree that it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. But, though it is a good thing to try, I do not agree that it is a good thing to try for that which you lack the machinery to attain. Failure has consequences. If nothing succeeds like success, nothing fails like failure. Failure may permanently injure the *morale* of a man. It may render even minor successes impossible in the future. Failure should never be carelessly risked any more than typhoid fever. Nobody is the same after it.

"Here is this fellow," you exclaim, "preaching against ambition and against trying! Surely ambition ought to be encouraged!"

No, I am not preaching against ambition or against trying! I am preaching against spurious ambition and against trying in the wrong direction. My only aim is to kill dangerous illusions. As for discouraging ambition, it cannot be done. Ambition will out—if there is enough of it!

Fewer mistakes, with fewer suppressed or expressed tragedies, would occur in the choice of careers if the people chiefly concerned—the youth and his advisers or his autocrats—would begin by considering the general qualities of the youth instead of the advantages of any particular career. That is to say, if they would argue from generals to particulars and not from particulars to generals. The great majority of youths would do equally well, or equally badly, in half a dozen different vocations, provided all these vocations fall within a certain range. If a youth shows an aptitude for retail trade (a most fascinating affair), it doesn't matter much whether he retails grocery, drapery, tobacco and cigars, cutlery, or children's toys. And if he has a childless uncle in the drapery trade but manifests a leaning towards grocery, then he will be well advised to lean at once the other way towards drapery; his temperament will not be thereby thwarted with fatal results.

If, on the other hand, the youth has an itch for wandering, little notion of time, a distaste for routine, a disgust for pen and ink—(such deplorable persons do unfortunately exist and occasionally, of course by mere fluke, they build

empires)—then it is perfectly futile to say to him:

“Now your father is branch manager of a bank; your uncle is accountant in an insurance office; your godfather is a limpet in Whitehall; and your Aunt Lucy’s cousin has considerable influence in the Tramways Department of the London County Council. See what a fine choice of careers for you! Choose which ever you fancy. We will leave you perfectly free to pick.”

You might as usefully leave him free to kill himself by drowning, hanging, ball-cartridge, or whisky. You and he must positively first discover what his qualities and what his defects are, and then afterwards gaze around for the vocations in which the qualities would help towards success and the defects be relatively harmless. And you must rule out all vocations, however brilliant and promising, in which the qualities of the youth would be valueless and the defects disastrous.

There are two sorts of cases, one rare, the other frequent, in which the choice gives rise to little trouble. The first is that of the youth whose temperament is so powerfully inclined in a particular direction that he knows infallibly what he wants and takes care that everybody else shall

know it too. The choice is made from the very start. Trouble of course may arrive in giving effect to it; but however grave such trouble may be the youth should count himself fortunate. He has been blessed above his fellows. His temperament simply refuses to be baulked, and real failure cannot overtake him.

The second sort is that of the youth who doesn't much mind what he is put to, since he has no strong preferences and a temperament that is without intensity. This sort of man abounds in the land and in all lands. He does not live, but exists. He is not unhappy. He is certainly far less unhappy than the man who, possessing a marked temperament, has not been able to humour it, has made an enemy of it. But he knows nothing of the deep, natural satisfactions of the other man who is doing all the time precisely the thing that he was born to do and that he can do well. This man has the tide with him and the wind, all the forces of Nature with him, and he alone is genuinely alive and making the best possible of life.



Strange as it may seem, the ambitious, energetic man has a rather important lesson to learn

from the common person who contentedly stays in the groove to which destiny appointed him. Not one ambitious man in a hundred ever learns this lesson or even dreams in his arrogance that the fellow over whose head he is climbing has anything to teach him.

The ambitious man seeks after one of three prizes, sometimes after two of them, sometimes after all three: power, money, knowledge. These commodities take a lot of getting. Half a life, three-quarters of a life, may be consumed in getting them. The eyes of the ambitious man are therefore fixed upon a distant goal. His gaze never leaves the goal, and the narrow, difficult path leading up to it. He becomes a man of one idea, which all his activities must subserve. Time is precious; at first he dare not waste it; then he loses the desire to waste it; finally he hates to waste it and cannot bring himself to waste it. His habits are definitely formed, and fixed habits are to wrought iron what wrought iron is to putty. They can be neither bent nor broken; they develop into the prison-cell of the man who has formed them. . . .

He attains his ambition; perhaps he is fifty years of age; he may be fifty-five or sixty. He is incapable immediately of believing that he has

attained it; but at length he does realise the enormous fact.

"I have arrived!" he says to himself, incredulous, and he has to repeat and repeat: "I have arrived! I have arrived! I have arrived!"

Then he says to himself:

"There is no longer any need for me to toil as I have toiled, nor to confine my interests as I have hitherto confined them. I will relax. I will enlarge my interests. I will let myself go. I will catch pleasure as it flies."

And, being a man of decision, he retires to bed one night with the firm resolution to start the new life the next morning. And he can't start the new life the next morning. He is just like a dog who has lost his master. His master was the terrific inducement to work. The inducement has vanished. He thinks boldly:

"My master was a tyrant, grotesquely addicted to discipline, cruel, hard to please, with no real understanding of dogs. Good riddance to him! I am my own master now. I will have a devil of a time."

He wags a foolish tail, trots aimlessly here and there, sees and smells nothing of exciting interest, is disillusioned, drops off to sleep in the roadway,

and has a narrow escape of being killed by a motor-car. At last he thinks:

"I wish to heaven my master hadn't lost me," and falls to envying all the other dogs who are following obediently at the heels of cruel tyrants.

The common world beholds the victim of great success and exclaims: "This man has attained all that he wanted. He wears a grim face. Why is he not uproariously happy?"

And well may the common world ask the question! The answer, however, is easy. The man is not happy because, having disposed of his object in life, he has no other genuine interests, and because he is the slave of his austere habits—habits not only of action but of thought. For half a century he has been living in the future; now he would live in the present and cannot. For half a century he has eschewed the common world; now he would rejoin the mass of mankind, but finds that he is out of touch with it. His existence is drawing inexorably to a close. Nobody can say that he has wasted it, or that he has not had the immense satisfactions that spring from the full and successful exercise of unusually fine faculties.

But has he made the best of life? The proof

that he has not is clear enough in the simple fact that his chief sensation is a feeling of disappointment. He has lived, and lived intensely, yet the cry in his heart is:

"I want to begin to live, and somehow I can't."

He has lived intensely, but not fully. He has spent two-thirds of his life in making himself what amounts to a monomaniac, and the impossibility of undoing that sinister work desolates and dejects him.

There is more in life than the successful exercise of the dominant faculties, supremely important as this is. And the ambitious man should strive, while he is yet young, to fix in his superior noddle that the dominant faculties are not everything, neither are they sufficient to themselves. The ambitious youth pegs himself down to his special work. He labours morning, afternoon, and evening. He bars out the world. He has no time for the world, and rather scorns it. He avoids women, adopting a somewhat condescending attitude towards them, as if saying:

"Girls are all right in their place, but I am called to a higher fate, and have no leisure for gewgaws of any description."

He is a monk under a rule as stern as that of the Trappists. His industry is as overwhelming

as the Falls of Niagara, and the shaken beholder marvels and admires and says:

“Here is the model young man.”

And the model young man fancies himself, and indeed has some grounds for fancying himself. But he thinks that he is doing a very fine thing, an unexceptionably fine thing, and what he is doing is not unexceptionably fine. Exception can and must be taken to it.

He should consider the mediocre people, those lilies of the field. They toil little; they spin little; but they are not cut off. If they do not live for the future they at any rate live in the present, and they try their best to obtain some distraction every day. It cannot be denied that they waste time and waste it deliberately. Now to waste a certain amount of time is excellent, just as to waste a certain amount of money is excellent. The man who looks twice at every halfpenny and at every half-hour is as vast a nuisance as he who invariably follows the dictates of reason. Think of a world in which all waste was rigorously suppressed. It would be a terrible world. Yes, a moderate amount of waste—of time, money, brains—is a valuable, an indispensable factor in a soundly organized existence. Waste is generally another name for distraction,

and distraction—distraction without an aim, distraction for its own sake—is essential to right living.

If a man does not acquire the habit of distraction when young, he is making trouble for his age. A schoolboy learns how to be a man, and a man should learn how to be an old man. How shall he *enjoy* unless he practises the art and craft of enjoyment? “I enjoy my work,” you say. Yes, we know all about that, but the enjoyment of work is not the kind of enjoyment I mean. I mean the kind of enjoyment that unbends the mind. Many ambitious men never really unbend their minds for thirty years. Then, when they have achieved, they find that “heaven has been pleased to give them nuts to crack after their teeth are gone.” A fate that seldom happens to the ordinary man!

I do not wish to extol the ordinary man. He is all right and very necessary to the scheme of things, but the ambitious man is a better. Only, the ordinary man succeeds in this one particular where the other too frequently fails. He spreads pleasure pretty evenly through his whole life. He doesn't deprive himself for forty years in order to have an indigestible surfeit for ten years. And he has had the wit to discover that women, in

spite of all that is said against them, are civilising to the male and the unrivalled unbenders of the masculine mind.

Naturally, the ambitious man will not imitate the unambitious. But he might deign to take a hint from the unambitious. He might go a little way in imitation; he might effect some compromise between living in the present and living in the future. He will object that he has not the time. The objection is overruled. There is something wrong with a scheme which renders life incomplete during the years when the capacity for savouring life is at its highest.



The over-cautious will certainly exclaim here:

“But this is dangerous advice you are giving!”

It is. All advice, however, is dangerous, both to the giver and to the taker. And to be alive at all is a highly dangerous experience. Those who really wish to avoid all perils should arrange to expire, and even then . . .! This applies to the ambitious and to the unambitious equally. I sadly admit that it is quite possible, in the strife for perfection, to check good habits too severely and so fall into the other extreme of bad habits. But in my view the risk is worth running. I am not

at all sure whether the worst of all sinners is not the self-righteous, self-opinionated, self-complacent prig. If I had to choose between passing the rest of my existence alone on a desert island with this gentleman and passing the rest of my existence alone on a desert island with an incompetent and negligent, broad-minded failure, I should undoubtedly vote for the latter. There is something to be said for failures—they are usually broad-minded. Whereas an excessive indulgence in good habits is bound to develop priggishness.

The truth—and when I use this huge word “truth” I, of course, mean only one facet of the truth—the truth is that life ought to be a feat of balancing, guided by a sense of proportion. To employ a simile: The right path lies, sometimes straight, sometimes curving, along a ridge from which the ground slopes downward on either side, now gradually, now steeply. Any simpleton can see and keep the path when the slope from it is steep and terrifying; it is the gradual slope which is to be feared, even by the wariest. And the gradual slope always gets steeper as it proceeds, so that after a certain point of declension has been reached it cannot be re-climbed, or it can only be re-climbed by the most transcendent effort of will and energy and persistence, an effort of which

the majority would be incapable. As similes lose their value if carried too far, I will here drop this particular simile.

The balancing aforementioned is accomplished by means of habits, chiefly mental habits, of which physical habits are merely the creation. Beware of absolutely fixed habits. They are nearly always the sign that the sense of proportion has gone or is going, and that one part of the mental organism is flourishing at the expense of another. Fixed habits become ruthless; in the end they will demand terrific sacrifices from their rivals in the organism.

You may read in the paper such an item as the following: "Mr. Joshua Crath died yesterday at the age of eighty-eight. He was to the end a prominent member of the choir of Winchester Cathedral, and it was his boast that he had not missed a single service for seventy-six years."

The record is appalling. Not to miss services is laudable on the part of a chorister, but not to miss a service for seventy-six years is a crime against the humanity in oneself. It is plain that after Mr. Joshua Crath had done, say, twenty-five years without a break, his life must have been reduced to one sole object—not to miss services in

Winchester Cathedral. The habit of not missing services in Winchester Cathedral must have come to occupy the throne of an autocrat in his organism. The conscience of Mr. Crath's organism was that habit, and it had no other conscience. Every social and family consideration was judged by one standard. Will attendance at the services in Winchester Cathedral be interfered with? If so, away with it!

This is an extreme example, but examples of the same species are to be found in all of us. When a wife says (not without wifely pride) of her husband: "John always works at so-and-so, or plays at so-and-so, at such and such a time. Nothing will induce him to miss it," then the husband should look out for himself. The chances are a thousand to one that he is off the high ridge. His sense of proportion is waning. An implacable tyrant is ascending the throne, and what ought to be a republic is being transformed into an absolute monarchy.

When a habit gets fixed, break it at any cost, and see what happens. The mere breaking is good in itself, being a proof of self-control; but the object of breaking is to find out what the habit has been doing for one, how far it has been interfering with the well-being of other faculties, and also

incidentally with the well-being of other people. What has been deemed to be a good habit, a habit conducive to the fullest exploitation of the organism, may well turn out to be a bad habit producing more harm than good. The all-round effect of habits—not the obviously beneficial only—must positively be tested, and it can only be tested by temporarily breaking the habits and examining the total results of so doing.

Few, if any, habits have an exclusively beneficial influence on the organism as a whole. The affair of living to the best advantage is extremely complicated. We know little of the physical part of the organism. We know far, far less of the mental part of the organism, though important discoveries about it have recently been made. A man at the end of his life has scarcely begun to know himself. And yet the right way of treating the organism has to be found by the young; if it is not found early, and kept, the great job is muddled past recovery. A hard task for the young, especially as Providence in its wisdom has deprived the young of the faculty of learning from the old! The young can only succeed by remembering that, in a sense much deeper than is generally realised, man is a creature of habit.

II

ESTABLISHING GOOD HUMOUR: THREE AIDS

UNLESS you believe that solitude is the best of life, and have the money and enterprise to buy a mountain-top and the skill to do your own washing-up, fabricate your own clothes and food, and extract your own teeth, you will not make the best of life without making the best of your relations with your fellow-creatures. Now, the subject of human relations is immense—and growing every year—but two main principles run through it like great roads.

Perhaps you have caught a horrid little boy pulling the legs off a live fly. Perhaps you have been the horrid little boy yourself; most of us have. He enjoys the operation with a wonderfully detached mind. Of course, he is inflicting atrocious cruelty, and doing it deliberately, for his own diversion. I call him horrid, and at the moment of dismembering he certainly is horrid. But he is not generally a monster of iniquity.

Probably his mother dotes on him, and rightly; and he is capable of tenderness even to his sisters. He may be a fine boy, full of ideals and good intentions and the desire to leave the world better than he found it. Yet he will torture a helpless and innocent animal! Why? Simply because it does not occur to him to think what the fly is feeling.

He omits to put himself in the place of the fly. He doesn't ask himself:

"Suppose a man as big as the Eiffel Tower came and pulled *my* legs off, how should *I* feel?"

No, he lacks the imagination which is necessary to this feat of putting himself in the fly's place. One of the chief defects of youth, if not the chief defect, is lack of imagination. You say:

"Oh! But it can't be lack of imagination. I happen to know this particular boy. He is a very imaginative boy. He will push the sofa into the middle of the room, jump on to it, and imagine himself on a desert island; and he can make up stories and adventures for himself in a marvellous way."

That, however, is not due to imagination, but to fancy or invention—a different and an inferior thing. If, for example, he could really imagine himself on a desert island he wouldn't play at the

desert island game, for the reason that it would be far too unpleasant. He confines his fancy and invention to the pleasant, romantic aspects of the affair.

The test of genuine imagination is the power to put yourself fully in the place of another being. By so doing, and not otherwise, you will avoid unnecessary social friction—and here is the first great principle of right human relations. Not all friction can be avoided, but a vast deal of friction can be avoided. The fly might have to be killed as a poison-carrier. But the boy sets up unnecessary friction between himself and the fly, and if the fly was a few sizes larger the boy would soon know about the friction. (Boys are much less apt to pull the legs off wasps, bees, or hornets, because these beasts can react on the boy and make friction apparent.)

It is notorious that youth is cruel, uncompromising, and harsh in judgment. Youth will deny this hotly, but the thing is so; and the chances are a thousand to none that when youth ages it will come round to the view that youth is cruel, uncompromising, and harsh. A large part of the explanation lies in the above-named defect—lack of imagination. Nearly all cruelty in human relations springs from lack of imagination.

The deliberate cultivation of the gift of putting yourself in the other person's place is the beginning of wisdom in human relations and the foundation of permanent good humour. The practice of this gift will change the very flavour of life. Its influence on the other person is magical—he feels at once that he is being understood; but its influence on oneself is almost equally magical. When you understand a person, realise his circumstances, desires, difficulties, you appreciate him, you like him. You like him because you *become* him. You make excuses for him. You turn his flank instead of offering a frontal attack. You are in the citadel before he knows where he is, and he feels glad to have you there. His life is sweetened, and so is yours.

My position is that the regular, detailed exercise of the imagination in regard to others should take precedence over all other educational exercises. It cannot be usefully started on a considerable scale until the faculties have reached a certain degree of maturity, but it should be started too soon rather than too late. Boys themselves have the rudiments of the gift. Nearly any boy will say:—

“I sha’n’t tell father this morning that I’ve damaged the car—he’s not in a good temper. I’ll

wait till to-night—he may have made a good score at golf.”

The boy, in a crude manner, is exercising real imagination; he is putting himself in his father's place. The gift is developing within him.

Sometimes when I see young men—yes, and old men, too—doing physical jerks, I think that the same amount of time given to the cultivation of the imaginative faculty might have decidedly more important results.

How is the faculty to be cultivated? By privately questioning oneself about the other man. “What does he want more than anything else? What is his weak point? What is his strong point? Why is he gloomy to-day? Why is he radiant? What are his worries? What is his notion of myself? How can I give him pleasure? Is he unwell? What are the things that annoy him? What is he thinking about? How can I flatter him? How should I feel in his place?” The faculty will grow just as a muscle will grow; also it will wither just as a muscle will wither; and for the same reasons.

You may argue that the ultimate aim of the whole business is selfish. I would not deny it. But if you try to decide what is selfish and what is not you are lost. Nobody will ever decide what

is selfish and what is not. The puzzle is academic, and has little practical interest. Whatever your aim may be in practising imagination and putting yourself in the other man's place, the beneficial nature of the result is beyond argument. It works good all round. It lessens friction; it increases comprehension; it broadens the mind; it is at the bottom of all diplomacy; it furthers your desires more quickly than any other device; it is the highest form of sagacity; it brightens the whole aspect of existence.



The second main principle which should dominate human relations is as negative as the first is positive. First, understand your fellow. Second, do not judge him, or at any rate do not judge him adversely. It will be said that, since "to understand everything is to forgive everything," the second is merely a corollary of the first. I do not think that this is so. To understand everything is not to forgive everything. It may happen that an expert in understanding is a severe judge of all conduct except his own. Some men will analyse motives with extraordinary insight and fairness, and then behave like merciless executioners to the subject of their analysis.

And even if to understand everything did result in forgiving everything, the aphorism would have little practical application to human beings, because we never do and never shall understand everything.

No! Do not for one absurd moment imagine that the effort of putting yourself in the place of your fellow is the final effort in the immense and complicated business of achieving good humour. Having understood as far as you can—refrain from moral condemnation! You may usefully practise moral laudation, within reasonable limits, though there can be no point in carrying indulgence to the limit of mawkishness; but do not judge adversely. The habit of judging, and especially of judging adversely, is at once the most popular and the most ridiculous of all human habits. It is more popular than alcohol, more ridiculous than vanity, and probably more poisonous than any drug yet invented.

Who am I to judge? Who are you to pass verdicts? Who put us on the bench? Have we heard all the evidence, or the hundredth part of it? Is there any possibility of us doing so? Are we not all equally in the dock? There is something tragically comic about the spectacle of one human being judging another. "Judge not that ye be not judged" is a historic and a magnificent

maxim. Yet I would venture to suggest that the purpose of not judging is not to avoid being judged oneself but to maintain one's own decency. It is indecent to judge another. It is, in the legal phrase, *ultra vires*. At the very worst, surely you are bound to say that the fellow was "born like that," with certain lamentable instincts and immoral twists, and can't help his turpitudes!

Do you judge yourself? Not usually. A few people do. They "lie awake at night weeping for their sins," but never for their big, glaring sins—only for their little sins or for purely imaginary sins. And I am not sorry for them because, while they are a nuisance to me personally, I know that they are enjoying themselves. An enlarged conscience is much more fun than an enlarged liver. But the majority of us do not judge ourselves adversely. We have all the material for adverse judgment before us, even if we don't care to examine it closely—but we refrain from judgment. We are always the advocate for the defence, and our ingenuity in defence is absolutely prodigious. The consequence is that we are on very good terms with ourselves. If we held the same attitude towards our fellows we should be on very good terms with the rest of the world: which is the immediate aim.

But, you say, one is bound to judge. Conclu-

sions are unavoidable. Not at all. It is quite possible to refrain by an effort of the will. Often, when the case seems to us to be difficult, we do easily refrain. Well, the case is really always difficult. It will be soon enough for us to begin judging when we have attained omniscience. We aren't there yet. Perhaps I had better speak for myself and say that I am not. Suspension of judgment, abstinence from judgment, can assuredly be acquired by continual watchfulness. It is a mere habit, like other habits—like the habit of judging. Its results are a conspicuous lessening of self-conceit, an increase of charitableness, and the growth of a general pleasantness. Indeed, it confirms and strengthens all the excellent consequences of putting yourself in the other man's place. This is the second aid towards good humour.

But I am not to be interpreted as recommending the abolition of the penal code. No doubt, if there were fewer judges, and if the prison system was rather less, instead of rather more, vicious than the criminals whom it martyrises, the world would be a better place; but a penal code is essential. Society must protect itself. However clumsily and wickedly and inefficiently, it must protect itself from the antisocial effects of certain acts. Its first duty is to hold together

and maintain its authority over its members. Any society must govern according to the plane of intelligence of the more stupid mass of its members. And it must have rules, and those rules must have as few exceptions as possible. It is bound to be less human than a human being; and some of the standards of conduct applying to a human being cannot, and should not, apply to a society. A society must judge, and it must appoint human beings to judge on its behalf, and those human beings must not deal with the origin of transgressions against the code; they can only deal with such transgressions in the light of their effects on the structure of the society. They are not individuals but impersonal agents.

And even individuals must protect themselves. A man's duty is to keep his end up. As a matter of practice the Biblical exhortation to turn the other cheek has not yet had any conspicuous success in the Christian world. I am well within the mark in saying that nine hundred and ninety-nine people out of every thousand, from archbishops to bootblacks, consistently ignore this exhortation in the conduct of their private lives. And indeed it is a direct incitement to anarchy. It would not work in Heaven itself. It never did work anywhere.

If one man does an act which injures or might

injure the well-being of another man, the second has got to take measures to guard his own interests. He would be a fool and a sinner if he did not.

This procedure, however, is not necessarily connected with moral judgment. If the required procedure involves unpleasantness for the injurer, that, so far as the defender is concerned, is accidental and not essential. If you broke with violence into my house and refused to retire, I might not presume to judge and condemn you, but I should presume to hit you over the head with a poker. Circumstances may and do arise in which it is possible to hit a fellow-creature over the head in a spirit of perfect Christian charity. It is the spirit in which these defensive things are done which alone counts. The occasional necessity of doing them cannot at all impair the force of the argument in favour of abstinence from adverse judgments. And a man ought to be able to do them without thereby losing his good humour and becoming a moral prig who arrogates to himself functions which are reserved for some power higher than the human.



I have dealt with two matters concerning one's

relations with others. I will now deal with a matter concerning oneself alone.

Few people pay attention to the mass of faces and demeanours which, especially in large towns, they see every day of their lives. Most of us naturally will notice a face or demeanour now and then, but we take the mass for granted, like bricks in an enormous wall. We see mechanically, without real observation, and though we have full opportunity for doing so, we fail to draw general conclusions from the vast quantities of human facts presented to us between every sunrise and sunset. If we did draw general conclusions, there is one above all others that we should certainly draw; and since everybody is very much like everybody else, we should have the wit to apply the same conclusion to ourselves.

That conclusion is that the majority of us, in addition to adopting a too critical attitude towards the human race, are addicted to worrying. Worry sits on the countenance of nearly every season ticket-holder in the morning train and in the evening train. You see it in the streets, offices, and restaurants, and you can even meet it in the country lanes. The habit of worrying infallibly leaves its mark, and the mark is there for all to notice.

Most people who have the money to buy them take drugs of some sort or another; perhaps relatively harmless drugs, but still drugs. Penetrate into the secret existence of nearly any man or woman, and, with the rarest exceptions, you will find drugs. Nay, you have only to begin talking about drugs to anybody, and the favourite drug of your companion will float up to the surface of the conversation. Chemists, those discreet repositories of hidden knowledge of human weakness, know that we are a nation of drug-takers, and most of them would be put out of business in a month if we suddenly ceased to take drugs save openly and under doctor's orders. Not that self-drugging does any good in the main result. It undoubtedly does more harm than good.

Now, in a similar way we are a nation of secret worriers. I maintain that no average honest observer, using his eyes, can walk along a busy street or journey in a daily train and avoid this general conclusion. To which you may reply that the majority of us have ample cause for worry. With which I do not agree. I will define worrying as letting the mind dwell persistently on troubles. That everybody has troubles is sure. But that the majority of us have enough troubles to justify us in letting our minds dwell on them persistently is far less sure. Indeed, I would deny it. Miser-

able and even tragic lives are not rare, but the average person in any Anglo-Saxon community enjoys an ordered and secure existence. He seldom has as much as he wants; often he has a lot less than he needs; but he generally has enough to manage with. The means of contentment are his if he knows how to employ them. He might be better off, but he might also be a lot worse off. Misfortunes may come, but they are usually not the misfortunes that in his worrying he has foreseen.

The truth is that most of us live in expectation of some catastrophe that never occurs. Look back into the weird history of your own brain, so full of secrets that nobody will ever learn, and dare to say that this is not so. You will not dare. And you may reasonably count on it that when you come to die you will still have escaped from those calamities the thought of which has irritated, if not poisoned, your days since first you understood the meaning of responsibility. If the experience of generations is a guide, it is certain that quite eighty per cent. of all worrying is perfectly futile. And of course it is worse than futile—it is harmful; it is a canker eating at the roots of happiness. The complexion of the general life of the community would change, faces and voices would brighten, paradise itself would

be anticipated, if all perfectly futile, silly, and noxious worrying could be abolished.

There is worrying and worrying, and distinctions must be made between the different kinds of this affliction, according to their causes. If the cause and the consequences are alike entirely beyond your control and outside your responsibility, to worry over the affair is childish and serves no end whatever. You have to accept it, suffer it, and cheerfully make the best of it. This is obvious; yet people, grown-up persons, genuine adults, apparently sane, will, as a fact, worry over such affairs.

On the other hand, if the trouble is due to some act or omission of your own, and the consequences are to any extent avoidable or remediable by yourself, then a generous amount of worry is not misplaced and too much worrying is better than too little. For be it remembered that individuals exist who never worry, and whose ability not to worry is due merely to a complete absence of the sense of responsibility and the sense of danger. These individuals have made a vice out of a virtue.

Between the two extremes above-mentioned an infinite variety of kinds of trouble might be indicated; they can be sorted out simply and satisfactorily on the broad principle that the less they are avoidable and remediable, the less is the ex-

cuse for worrying about them. Reflection, cogitation, planning, preparation for the worse or the worst—these things may, and probably will, be advisable or necessary in a greater or a smaller degree, but beyond the proper degree they are harmful.

Large numbers of people imagine that if five grains of a medicine constitute a good remedy for a given disease, ten grains will be twice as good a remedy. The notion is false, and equally false is the notion that two hours' cogitation over a trouble will necessarily be twice as useful as one hour. One hour may yield a harvest of sagacity; two hours may degenerate into mere worrying. How is one to tell when cogitation has lasted long enough? It is not very difficult to tell. Take the well-known experience, with which we are all of us familiar, of waking up to a worry in the middle of the night—just before dawn is the really sinister hour. The thoughts run round and round. They recur with the periodicity of hobby-horses. Nothing will stop them; nothing will vary them; and as the brain fatigues itself so does the aspect of the affair get gloomier and gloomier until universal perdition seems to occupy the entire horizon. At this point, if you have any luck, you drop off to sleep. And when you awaken into the light of day the monstrous

absurdity of the nocturnal reflections, their gross lack of balance and of perspective, fill you with a startled sense of idiocy. Well, cogitation develops into worrying when the same thoughts monotonously recur and recur. And all worrying, at whatever time it takes place, has some of the character of those night-lunacies. It is bereft of common sense; it lacks balance and perspective, and makes for mischief. To act according to its conclusions is perilous, and sometimes fatal.

Worrying is a bad habit of mind. And since habits of mind resemble bodily habits, and are formed and broken in a similar way, the problem of curing it should not be insoluble. Good habits are formed through regular discipline, and broken through indulgence. Bad habits are formed through indulgence and broken by regular discipline. But habits of mind are usually less manageable than bodily habits, and that is the trouble about worrying. You can cause the body to perform certain gymnastics at a given time every day, but to exercise the same power over the mind is a different matter.

The mind has a limited monarchy over the body. What is the force that has even a very limited monarchy over the mind? Is the mind the Ego,

or is the mind merely the servant of the Ego? If it is merely the servant, it is a very unreliable, capricious, inefficient, and disobedient servant. At this point one is apt to tumble into quagmires of psychological speculation, which may amuse those who are interested in intellectual bogs but which cannot usefully further the present purpose. We may as well keep carefully out of them and just assert as a dogma that the "I," the Ego, whatever it is, can and does, as a matter of daily fact, exert some sort of control over the mind. And when the need is acute the control usually increases.

The idle youth wastes months before the examination; his mind has got the bit between its teeth; but in the last month, desperately, the youth chastises and masters his mind, compelling it to concentrate for long periods on the most distasteful subjects. The point is that he forces it to concentrate.

The grown man falls in love and neglects his business, which begins to suffer gravely. At length, frightened, he drags his mind off the image of the girl, and lashes it into affairs which are to the girl as sand is to sugar.

This is perhaps an extreme form of auto-suggestion. I should not care to have to define auto-

suggestion. If it means anything, it ought to mean suggesting something to oneself. But I do not see how one can suggest anything to oneself. One cannot start suggesting to oneself until the suggestion is already there, and if it is already there, the trick is already done. The "I," however, can suggest particular activities to the mental apparatus, and if auto-suggestion means anything it must mean such suggestion, from the "I" to the mental apparatus.

The New Nancy school of psychological performers claims to have made real progress in the practice of both hetero-suggestion (suggestion from another person) and auto-suggestion. It claims to have cured diseases, such as varicose veins, by means of suggestion. In my blunt British savagery I do not believe this story; I think the Nancy school is deceiving itself. That the immediate symptoms (but not the cause) of, say, a mild nervous headache can be permanently or temporarily removed by auto-suggestion I do believe, for I have done it myself; and I believe also that sleep can sometimes be so induced. But I would not go farther. Hypnotism is undoubtedly dangerous, and I should be surprised if auto-suggestion were not in some degree dangerous.

But there are two details of mental practice

in auto-suggestion which, in my opinion, might be advantageously accepted from the Nancy school by all of us. The first is: Do not bully the mind—persuade it. Do not say: “You *shall* or I’ll break your neck for you.” Say, in a persuasive tone: “You will, I’m sure you will. I’m quite sure you will.” For many years I was an advocate of compulsion for the mind. I have now abandoned compulsion, owing to the arguments of the Nancy school.

The second detail has to do with the mechanical process of getting the mind to stick to one point. The mind is a greater wanderer than Ulysses was. It simply will not stay where it is put, though Heaven knows it loves to stay where it is not put and where it ought not to be. The new Nancy dodge is to repeat the suggestive phrase in a low, persuasive tone as fast as you can possibly utter it; thus has the mind no chance to wander! It is certainly a good dodge.

So, if X is your worry, you repeat *at the utmost possible speed*, in a nice, seductive, conciliating, and yet absolutely convinced voice: “You will not think about X at all. No, you will not.” This device, if honestly and regularly employed, “works,” and should ultimately prove to be a practically complete cure for worry.

Some, of course, will regard all this Nancy stuff as in the nature of a circus. I do not assert that they are wrong, but my impression is that they are far from being wholly right. Others will clutch at it as hypochondriacs swallow a new patent medicine. But both camps will, I hope, adopt the wisdom of two plain maxims which are thousands of years older than any Nancy school. The first is: If you don't want the mind to indulge in one sort of activity, give it something else to do. The mind will not do two things at once. When you are worrying, do not merely try not to worry; give the mind a definite task, positive, not negative. The second is: Unburden yourself to a friend, whatever the disadvantage may be. Total suppression is the worst of all evils in this matter of worrying.

In one way or another of mental gymnastics the habit of worrying can assuredly be either broken or very considerably modified. And when the break or the modification has been accomplished, the result in happiness and zest will astonish the liberated victim. This is the third great aid towards good humour.

III

THE BUSINESS OF EDUCATION

THE object of education is to prepare us for complete living. Herbert Spencer said this, and as one of his few remaining admirers I agree with him, though I doubt whether he himself knew what "complete living" is. Even assuming him to have been as ill as he thought he was, his own existence could not be described as a satisfactory illustration of the value of his own theories. Indeed, a man who would stuff his ears up in order to escape the conversation of his friends was without doubt strongly desirous of living incompletely. Nevertheless, the educational theories of Spencer, which are now at least seventy years old, still powerfully survive. I only mention his case as a warning to those, especially the young and cocksure, who assume that their practice is bound to accord with their theory. It is a fact that the people who are best satisfied with their own education are too often the very people who don't know how to live, either completely or incompletely.

Anyhow, here we all are, with a mechanism of body and mind, destined to spend a certain amount of time in a universe of which each of us is the centre. And the problem of complete living is the problem of getting the best and the fullest we can out of the strange adventure. Query: What should be the curriculum of our education? The query, of course, cannot be adequately answered. The most we can do towards finding an answer is to enumerate certain branches of knowledge and discipline without which it is obvious that complete living cannot possibly be achieved.

For instance, there is the aforesaid mechanism of body and mind. This is our instrument, machine, or apparatus for the earthly task. And we have nothing else. If our bodies are not efficiently working, our minds cannot work efficiently (and probably *vice versa*), and complete living is at once scotched. Not one human machine in a million will keep itself in order. Human machines need constant attention, and they cannot be attended to properly if they are not understood. Hence some knowledge of human physiology (the science of our body and its functions) and of psychology (the science of our mind and its functions) is an essential preliminary to complete liv-

ing, and no branch of education can be regarded as more important than this.

Unless you have some sound information about, and comprehension of, your own organism, you are in a situation similar to, but far worse than, that of the man who is given a beautiful car and starts to drive it away without ascertaining the principles of the engine and what the levers and other exterior gadgets really signify. He may go some distance and avoid trouble, but it is absolutely sure that he will not get the best out of the car, nearly sure that he will damage it, and fairly sure that he will have a break-down. All which, again, is obvious, and I ought to apologise for stating it to an enlightened public.

And yet who among us can put his hand over his liver and say with certainty: "My liver is exactly there"—the liver being the largest organ in the human frame? Why, most people don't know where the stomach is until they get a pain therein; and they imagine that their lungs are a kind of twin bags which they fill with fresh air when they breathe. They do not suspect that mental fatigue produces an actual physical poison, or that the skin itself is an excretory organ of high importance, or that a yawn is primarily a sign of defective aeration. They exist in a con-

dition of dangerous ignorance. They are aware of this ignorance, and they rather like it, and the notion of curing it by a course of study is repugnant and even shocking to them. They consider that detailed information about their interiors is not quite nice, and, indeed, to be deprecated.

Such ignorance pervades every intellectual rank of society, and it is noticeably rife among our educational mandarins, who habitually prescribe for certain large sections of young students a rule of life which is an outrage against common sense and common decency. In a word, the streets of the universe are packed with drivers of motor-cars who can't drive because they most comically and most tragically don't know at all what sort of a weird thing it is they are shoving along.

Again, just as we cannot reasonably expect to attain to complete living unless we know *what* we are, we cannot reasonably expect the same unless we know *where* we are, both in time and in space. We must at any rate have some general knowledge about the earth to which we are clinging as it whirls. After all, the earth is not so very big—and travelling makes it smaller every year! The sun is immensely larger than the earth, and there are stars so huge that if they were

put where the sun is they would occupy the whole space of the earth's orbit—and a lot more beside. Therefore we need not be frightened of the earth as a subject. We ought to have some concise knowledge of universal geography and of universal history. The two go together and are properly inseparable, and the point of them is that they show us where we stand.

We shall learn from geography the importance of environment, and from history the annoying but useful truth that all acts have consequences, and that those consequences cannot be escaped. Also that society is for ever moving on, evolving out of something into something else; that there is nothing final or absolute; no goal, but a succession of goals; that everything is always in a state of flux or change, and that this is the very essence and meaning of life! Such knowledge will be reinforced by some study of science in its main principles. Through combining geography and history with some science, and in no other way, shall we become possessed of the supreme idea of evolution fortified by the full, conscious conviction that natural laws cannot be circumvented. Without a realization of this supreme conception, and without this guiding conviction, complete living can be naught but a sentimental dream, for

the reason that the material is lacking for sound judgment of aims, conduct, and life-values generally.

Thirdly, it is obvious that complete living cannot be achieved unless our education enables us to develop our faculties in such a way as to earn a livelihood. The chief thing after all is to keep alive and to perform the feat with pleasure to ourselves. No use or sense in magnificently educating ourselves for complete living if in the end we have to depend on others for our bread-and-butter, or if we can only earn our bread-and-butter in ways that are repugnant to us! Before it is anything, living is, and ought to be, a business proposition; and no human specimen is more absurd than he who can do everything except keep himself by his own exertions.

Further, as every human being is a citizen, every scheme of education should comprise the attainment of knowledge concerning the rights and duties of citizenship. The welfare of the State depends upon every citizen individually exercising his rights and performing his duties in a sagacious manner. Every citizen should know the essentials about national and local government, and about the difficulties which beset governing bodies, from the highest to the lowest,

under whose sway he is. It should be equally impossible for a windbag on the parish council, or for a knave in Parliament, to dupe him by spouting theatricalities. He cannot be said to have reached complete living until he has opinions of his own, and informed opinions, which will enable him to be a citizen to his own advantage and to the advantage of the community.

And then, no man can be sure of living completely unless he studies the principles and practice of education as a subject in itself. One's own individual education must include a comprehension of education in general. Why? When he has dealt with his own case, why must the individual trouble about general principles? It was Herbert Spencer, a bachelor, who answered that as the chances are in favour of every individual becoming a parent, every individual should understand the subject of education in order that he may do justice to his children. The majority of parents are agreed that parenthood, though admittedly it satisfies a profound instinct, and may give intense joy, is a terrible responsibility, cause of friction and worry, and source of disappointment. The black side of parenthood could naturally never be abolished, but assuredly its blackness would be mitigated if parents knew a little

better what they were about. As a fact, they too often start out on the tremendously difficult enterprise of bringing up children without the slightest idea of what they are about. They blunder; they suffer; the unfortunate children suffer; and the hope of complete living vanishes. A man may indeed live completely until he becomes a parent, and then find himself faced with complications which he had utterly forgotten to prepare himself for, and from a success he deteriorates into a failure. He has not looked ahead far enough. At twenty it did not occur to him to think of what is involved in the vast affair of producing the next generation; and quite possibly, if anybody had suggested to him that he should arm himself for fatherhood, he would have laughed as the young laugh at mere priggishness. And he would have been wrong. When you are a parent it is already rather late in the day to begin training yourself to be a parent.

Finally, no man can claim to be living completely until he has acquired definite standards of right and wrong, and therefore any sound scheme of education must have a department of morals. More priggishness, some will say! Well, they must say it.

I do not pretend to have mentioned all of even

the essentials to living completely. I have said nothing, for example, about the subject of social deportment. Nor of the subject of the utilisation of leisure in diversion—nobody can amuse and distract himself satisfactorily by merely wishing to do so, and many otherwise completely-living men have fallen short of completeness in this very respect. Both these named subjects are essentials.




I have been employing the word “man,” but it should be taken in the generic sense, to include women also, and my remarks are addressed impartially to both sexes. Although I do not hold that women should receive education, and should educate themselves, in the same way as men, I do uncompromisingly hold that a woman’s education should comprise everything that I have already mentioned. I can conceive no reason why, for example, a woman should not be acquainted with the structure of the society in which she has to live, the manner in which it is developing—from what previous state into what future state, and the machinery by means of which it functions. Nor do I see how she can live completely without this knowledge. Nor do I think that she is in any way constitutionally debarred from ac-

quiring this knowledge. Nor do I think that the acquirement of such knowledge is incompatible with charm, sentiment, a good complexion, agreeable frocks, and the right to change her mind. And especially I do not think that a woman, who, in the most important years, has far more to do with children than a man, can properly neglect the study of the general principles of the science of education.

As for earning her living, every adult who is not physically or mentally incapable of doing so should pay by work for his or her place in society. The work, of course, may not be remunerated in money, but it will always be remunerated by something that money represents. The main activity of a very large proportion of women is, and always will be, housekeeping. Most women, I regret to say, keep house amateurishly, because they have never been taught, or have never taken the trouble to learn, the craft of housekeeping in a common-sense and thorough way. The majority of them "pick it up" from other amateurs, and the grand result is that they themselves, and the persons for whom they keep house, are prevented by friction and inefficiency from living completely—complete living being a highly delicate affair

that is only too easily disorganised by trifling mishaps.

This attitude and this judgment concerning women will be resented, perhaps violently; but, then, nothing on earth arouses more violent resentment than the ruthless, unchangeable course of evolution. Excellent and well-meaning and very nice persons call it all sorts of bad names. It just calmly proceeds. And evolution is undoubtedly in the directions which I have indicated.



Even males may be rather agitated by my presentation of the essentials of a sound curriculum. And well they may be! I am disturbed myself. We are so accustomed to the fashions of the day in education, and so obsessed by them, that anything which cuts right across them is bound to upset us. True, education has improved. We are no longer in the period when a knowledge of Greek and Latin was arbitrarily considered a sufficient outfit for a man intending to rule his fellows, and when the skill to talk French, sing, play, and embroider, was all that public opinion demanded from the mothers of the flower of the race. But the said period is not yet very far

behind us. Even to-day there are men who arbitrarily will say of another man who does not know the difference between Charlotte Brontë and Emily Brontë: "The fellow is uneducated." And there are men who will arbitrarily say of another man who is not aware that the resistance of water to a body moving through it varies as the square of the speed of the body: "The fellow is uneducated." Similarly, there are women who arbitrarily will say of a woman who hasn't seen the Russian Ballet, or is unfamiliar with the history of the suffrage movement: "Poor thing! She is frightfully ignorant."

We have an insufficient sense of proportion in our view of education. We permit ourselves to be astonished and scornful at the absence of certain fashionable scraps of knowledge, while accepting with equanimity the absence of whole bunches of knowledge that are of primary urgency. And we are thus because we do not put any curriculum to a proper test. In fact, we have no proper test, for the reason that we generally forget to ask ourselves what is the aim of education. At the best we seize on something silly in a given curriculum, and strike it fiercely out, or we stick some missing detail in, and think we have arrived at perfection.

The way of approach is wrong. We begin by examining the means to the end instead of first ascertaining what the end is. If we first defined and clearly envisaged the end, we should be in a better position to pass a verdict on the means. I am inclined to think that no existing curriculum of any well-known educational institution has been framed exclusively in the light of the notion that the object of education is to attain complete living. And in the great historical institutions, such as the older universities, this obviously would be impossible; for they are, and must be, ruled by tradition, and can only be modified by very slow degrees. That they are being modified is much.

And here the hasty should be warned against an unreflecting wholesale condemnation of existing curriculums. The tendency of all boys, and of nearly all young men, is to exclaim that such and such a subject is perfectly futile in the practice of after-life. It may or it may not be, but to decide definitely whether it is or is not might be difficult. We should have no bathrooms, railway-bridges, flying-machines, cure for diphtheria, antiseptic operations, if certain obstinate students had not insisted on studying subjects which the great wise world, with cheerful disdain, held to be perfectly futile. My complaint against existing

curriculum is not that they are full of futilities—they are not—but that they show a lack of proportion and ignore essentials. I wonder whether a single educational institution could be found in this island where it is obligatory for young men and women over twenty to study the principles of the science of education. Which is equivalent to wondering whether there is a single educational expert who has effectively remembered that one of the chief purposes of young men and women is to become parents of well-brought-up and satisfactory children.



The best education is self-education. Indeed, all education is tending more and more towards self-education. The child is encouraged to find knowledge for himself instead of having knowledge forced into him under a kind of hydraulic pressure. Learning by rote is being abandoned. General principles and natural laws are taking the place of rules, and, in short, schools bear a far less striking resemblance to purgatory than they used to do. Even the best schools, however, have one characteristic—they do not allow boys and girls to be their own masters and mistresses. It is after leaving school that real education starts

—or should start. So that those earnest young persons who consider that their school days have been wasted need not repine nor weep over the years that are gone beyond recall. Ninety-nine excuses out of a hundred made by the uneducated for their lack of education will not bear serious examination.

There are two classes of pupils leaving school—a very small class, those who proceed to a university, and a very large class, those who proceed directly into the world. I will take the small class first. In former days only a tiny percentage of this small class had any genuine interest in their own education. The majority attended a university with the avowed intention to learn as little as possible, and to have as great a lark as possible. This is now changed, even in the ancient and highly conservative universities. The majority of undergraduates are as earnest as a dog with a bone. And the curious fact is that the more earnest they are, the more apt they are to call their university bad names, and to insist that it is nearly everything a university ought not to be, and that the authorities show extraordinary ingenuity in rendering education difficult or impossible. Which attitude is pardonable (because of its earnestness), but absurd and egotistic.

The earnest undergraduate seems to have one grand leading idea, namely, that his university ought to be planned, established, and specially arranged to meet the requirements of his own particular case. Now the university does not regard the affair in quite this light. The earnest undergraduate is important; he may be as important as a whole town, but compared to the university, he is somewhat like a town built by a river. The river was there centuries before the town, and it will be there centuries after the town has vanished. The town is a mere incident in the life of the river. The individual undergraduate is a mere incident in the life of the university. The university caters, and must cater, for the average undergraduate. There is no average undergraduate, really. Hence every undergraduate must adapt himself more or less—and usually rather more than less—to the university.

The more strenuous the student the more adaptation has to be performed. But the most singular, peculiar, and purposeful student can, if he is modest enough, discover somewhere in the university the material necessary for his education. Idle for him to inveigh against old-fashioned fixed courses of study! He must be clever enough to use them usefully. Idle for him to cry

out upon the lack of apparatus. The finest work has always been done with the most primitive apparatus.

Idle for him to criticise dons, tutors, and professors. He is his own chief don, tutor, professor. The university will never educate him; it will merely provide a field where he can educate himself. And it will leave him free to exploit the vast organisation as he chooses. There are certain physical things that the university will not permit to him, but he is essentially free, and herein is one of the greatest advantages of a university. If it genuinely teaches anything, it teaches the student to manage himself, and places but small obstacles in the way of him making a perfect fool of himself if he so chooses. This is a high virtue in a university. Not that I am indiscriminately praising universities. Far from it! Universities are not more perfect than undergraduates—and not less. Universities are terribly deficient. And I hate to hear reactionary fathers saying that the deficiencies don't really matter since a youth goes to a university to meet his fellows and lead the communal life and accustom himself to self-reliance and the art of give-and-take. If the universities had no educational deficiencies, the youth would still meet his fellows

and live the communal life and acquire self-reliance, and so on. But, on the other hand, I do hate to hear earnest undergraduates discoursing upon their unique difficulties. University education cannot be handed out complete like a cake on a tray. It has to be fought for, intrigued for, conspired for, lied for, and sometimes simply stolen. If it had not it would scarcely be education.



I come now to the immensely larger class of students leaving school, those who do not proceed to a university. Many among them, of course, sell their school-books and thank Heaven they have done with education for the rest of their lives. But many, having perceived that school is merely the portico of the vast mansion of knowledge, seriously determine to get inside. These will either attend evening-classes or pursue private study, or do both. In any case, the disadvantages are considerable—and not the least disadvantage is the lack of time. But the advantage of untrammelled freedom within such leisure as they have is tremendous and inspiring. They can follow their own ideas in the execution of the gigantic affair of learning to understand, sympa-

thiſe with, and enjoy the world, and of fulfilling themſelves ſo that they ſhall live completely. They have everything to chooſe from. They are at liberty to make their own miſtakes and to correct them in their own way. They are genuinely entitled to ſay that they are engaged in *ſelf-education*. I can imagine few ſpectacles more exhilarating than the ſpectacle of the young man or girl ſitting down eagerly to the great buſineſs. The idea of the firſt evening, or the firſt early morning, poſitively palpitates with drama. The only thing that might reconcile me to growing young again would be the marvellous opportunity of ſtarting quite afreſh to educate myſelf.

Naturally and rightly, all young ſtudents are extremely ingenuous. Simple-minded creatures, with hopes as abſurd as their methods! But they are fine. And their miſtakes would be reduced to a minimum if they would bear in mind a few obvious conſiderations. There are, for inſtance, two preliminary conſiderations. The firſt is that in the young a feeling of indolence and a diſinclination for effort are almoſt always a ſign that the phyſical organiſm is out of gear. Healthy young people are never indolent. They cannot be. Energy doesn't trickle out of them; it burſts out of them. The feeling of indolence, therefore,

should be treated physically rather than mentally. The second consideration is that boredom in study proves either that the subject is distasteful (but none of my essential subjects could be distasteful to a representative mind), or that the method of study is wrong. All study, all self-education, should be interesting. If it is not, then it wants altering. Of course, a small percentage of individuals are incapable of education under even the most favourable circumstances; and they must reconcile themselves to incomplete living. They have been born moribund. Dullness is their appointed portion, and there is nothing more to be said.

These two preliminary considerations having been dealt with, we can pass on. The most important advice to be offered to the fortunate band of enthusiasts for self-education is not to begin to specialise too early. Moreover, many people, while conscious of a keen desire for knowledge, do not at first feel a desire for any special knowledge, though in the end they are bound to specialise, for the mere matter-of-fact reason that nobody will be silly enough to try to know everything in the same degree. These undecided persons are apt to fall into the error of deciding impulsively for the mere sake of deciding, and to de-

cide wrongly: which means wasted energy and a new start. They would do well to indulge in a period of wide miscellaneous browsing over the limitless fields of knowledge, till the interior voice indicates the true direction. It is probable that the most successful self-educators have begun with an orgy of indiscriminate mental voracity. But even when the true direction is never in doubt, specialisation should not be hurried. General education must precede special education, or the consequences will be lopsidedness, lack of proportion, and incomplete living in an intensified form. Specialisation must have a firm basis, enormously broader than itself. No special branch of knowledge can be fully understood alone. It must be put into relation with the whole sum of knowledge. And whether the specialisation has to do with one's livelihood, or whether it is an end in itself, the rule holds. Further, if the fullest possible amount of vital happiness is to be achieved, the entire process of self-education must be conducted with that object in view.

It would be untrue to say that life is too short for both general and special education. Life is neither too long nor too short; it has the right length. And the more sagaciously it is employed, the longer it will appear to be. General

and special education can undoubtedly be fitted into the span of existence, and, in any case, it is better to learn to live well generally than to learn to live well in one particular, neglecting all the other particulars. A man who slips into this error is like the athlete who over-develops his muscles and dies early from heart disease. The plan of education must be carefully and well laid. And the execution of the plan must be constantly checked by its action upon the life lived. In the ardour of self-education, the aim of education is too often quite lost sight of, and, without knowing it, the devotee veers further and further away from the goal. Is it not notorious that the studious don't know how to live, and are strangers in the world—in which every man should be ashamed to be a stranger? If education does not teach you to like life, does not create a wish to get closer to life, and to various sorts of life, does not show you that no sort of life is unworthy to be understood or devoid of interest, does not inspire you to plunge deeply into the great stream of existence instead of standing in priggish repudiation on the banks—if it does not do all this, then it is futile. It is indeed a waste of time, and a man might as well be em-

ployed in counting sheep as they pass through a gate.

Lastly, it is to be remembered, in all solemnity, that though education has a beginning, there is no end to it. The more you know the more you find you don't know. Only the wisest know what fools they are, and this realising of unwisdom is the supreme sensation, for it puts one in one's place, and displays the wonder of life as nothing else can. As education widens, so does the marvellous vision of the universe widen, and the idea of God takes a more noble and mighty shape. Men who have learned to live completely in the everyday sense will die in the attempt to live still more completely. The sight of a man striving after knowledge in his last years, strenuously using the remnant of existence to add treasure to treasure, has excited the laughter of the thoughtless, who demand: "What will he be able to do with it?" Nobody knows what he will be able to do with it. But unless all science is built upon a total falsity, nothing is or can be lost, either on this side the grave or the other. It is asserted that we know, and can know with certainty, nothing about the other side of the grave. We ought to know this, anyhow, that ultimate waste will not occur.

IV

STARTING IN LIFE

N EARLY all young people who go into the world in order to exchange their talents for a livelihood begin as employees. And most of them remain employees to the end of their working days. That is to say, the great majority of us are dependent upon the approval and the goodwill of somebody else for the safety of our existence in that dangerous and shifting piece of human mechanism which we call society. Commonly the inexperienced youth (in which word, as usual, I include both young men and young women) enters employment with the excellent intention of doing his best—of giving himself generously in return for his fixed wages. And the first thing he commonly discovers is that his fellow-employees are not doing their best. He perceives, or his companions sharply bring to his attention, that the spirit of the place is against generosity in the matter of services. The theory is that since the employer is “out” to give as lit-

tle as possible, the proper course for the employees is to give as little as possible. The employer pays a certain calculable sum, while expecting an equivalent in services which are not calculable, which are elastic, and which the employer will assuredly stretch as far as he can. The affair develops into a sort of double conspiracy, the employer and the employees plotting against one another.

"Why on earth," the employees demand, "should we do more than we need do, when the result is solely to enrich the employer? If we really put our backs into the business, will the employer at the end of the week put his back into the business of suitably rewarding us? He will not. He will pay us exactly the same amount as if we had not tired our backs. He may smile his thanks, or even murmur some praise, but smiles and praise will purchase neither cigarettes nor silk stockings. Therefore . . ." etc., etc.

There is a sort of rough justice in the argument, and the beginner usually accepts it at its face value and acts accordingly. Nevertheless, the policy is a mistake from the employee's point of view. True, the employee who does his best will, in the case of nineteen employees out of twenty, give more than he receives, and to other employees

he will have the air of a philanthropist. But he will not continue for very long to give more than he receives; for he will either receive promotion in the place where he is, or he will find a better situation in some other place. The rumour of a good active employee soon spreads abroad, the reason being that good, active employees are very rare.

Yes, they are very rare indeed, and the secret preoccupation of every employer is to find them and stick to them. Such an employee, in a period of trade crisis, will be retained after many others have been politely thrown into the street. Such an employee has a powerful weapon against an employer in that he is terribly difficult to replace. He may have faults—he may be dull, stupid, slow, bad-tempered, churlish—but his willingness to work, his readiness not to dole out his energy but to lavish his energy, will weigh advantageously against these defects. He is steadily moving along towards *security*, perhaps the asset most highly treasured in the employed world. He may be giving during the week more than he receives from his employer on Saturday, but in fact he is, in all probability, receiving quite as much as he gives, though something—not money—of what he receives costs the employer nothing.

Moreover, the transaction should not be viewed simply as a transaction between the employee and the employer. It is also a transaction between the employee and society at large. And, seen in this light, it will appear less unjust, even in the monetary sense. Justice cannot be calculated and balanced up week by week, nor year by year. In practice it is achieved by decades, or in half a lifetime or a lifetime. The reward of energy seldom comes immediately. It often lags ten years behind; it generally lags five years behind. A man advanced in life may seem to be overpaid for what he is doing at a given moment. But at that moment he is, actually, being paid for what he did years earlier. And when we see, as we not seldom do, old men apparently obtaining large salaries for light labour, we should bear this in mind. What they are being paid for is their reputation, their reliability, their experience, their reserves of skill and force ready for emergencies which may arise.

Hence the young employee will be well advised not to ladle out his energy with a teaspoon, nor to weigh it continually in scales against immediate money. He possesses energy in plenty, and he must fling it around as some millionaires do coin. He must take the risk of not getting the

ultimate reward. He must not think in short periods, but in very long periods. He must sow the seeds of oaks, not of Virginia creepers, and exercise that immense patience which the growth of acorns demands.

Of course it will be objected that if all employees conducted themselves according to this advice, none of them would get the advantages of it, while the employer would be on velvet. True! No answer can be put forward to this objection. It need not, however, trouble us, because there is not the slightest chance of all employees, or of the majority of employees, conducting themselves according to the aforesaid advice. The advice will be welcomed by all, but acted upon by few, and I am not going to pretend anything else.

The few who do act upon it should remember that in nothing is tact more necessary than in well-doing. Idleness in an employee will cause no unpleasantness with his fellow-employees unless they are compelled to do the idler's work for him, and should this happen, the idler will soon be in urgent need of a situation. If the idler's idleness inconveniences nobody but the employer, the other employees will endure the employer's misfortune with the utmost fortitude and tranquillity, and the idler will get on very well with them,

possibly even coming in for a certain amount of admiration. But the truly "industrious apprentice" must take care. If he does not exercise diplomacy, tact, and the subtlety of serpents, he will be passively, and perhaps actively, disliked, for the obvious reason that he is setting up a new and more exacting standard for all his fellows, inspiring the employer to criticise them with sharper eyes, and generally disturbing the eternal order of things. Sin has its penalties, but so has righteousness. Moreover, righteousness is very apt to be called, and to develop into, self-righteousness.

And let not the industrious apprentice suppose that the employer will like him all the more for thus unsettling the entire place by his splendid endeavours. The reverse will be the case. The employer would doubtless be willing to sack the whole of the rest of the staff if he could replace every individual by an industrious apprentice. But he cannot, and he knows he cannot. Meanwhile he desires above everything harmony.

Again, the industrious apprentice sometimes falls into the habit of conscious moral superiority even to his employer, who perhaps is a bit of a slacker himself. He may go so far as to put his employer in the wrong. Now employers, like

princes, are never wrong. Therefore, let the industrious apprentice go warily. The art of dealing with one's employer and the art of dealing with one's fellow-employees are scarcely less important than the art of dealing with the work itself.

This is not cynicism, merely sense.

A last point in this connection. If the energetic, conscientious, generous, and tactful employee is also very ambitious, he will, sooner or later, and probably sooner than later, be confronted with the problem: "Shall I stay where I am, or shall I be adventurous and go somewhere else?" To my mind the answer is clear. He should not stay where he is. The man who remains long in one situation sinks into a groove; he fails to acquire new experience; and he loses elasticity and enterprise. And as the years pass, he grows older and the fresh openings diminish in number. Also, he becomes afraid. Employers usually hesitate about engaging an employee who has not budged for a long period. They fear his fixed habits. They know that he will not and cannot respond easily to unfamiliar suggestions. This state of affairs is naturally well known to the employer under whom the employee has been for many years. The employer, though he does

not wish the employee to leave him, feels that he has that hold over him which time alone can give, and inevitably the feeling hardens his attitude towards the employee. The ambitious employee who knows himself to possess fundamental character must avoid grooves with all his heart and must, while showing prudence, face risks.

Seldom does it occur that a genuine improvement of status can be attained without facing risks. There are scores of fine opportunities round about any ambitious employee. They are useless until they are explored, and not a solitary one of them can be explored unless the employee is prepared to burn his boats. Nearly all very successful men have burnt their boats, not once but several times. They have continually explored opportunities, now and then with lamentable temporary results. They have gone on. Their lives have been dramatic, and often melodramatic. Great success cannot be achieved without serious risks, and therefore without the abandonment of security.

But not all energetic employees of sound character are ambitious. Many of them are quite unambitious, and want security first and last. Security assured, they will toil hard and often use considerable brains in order to make it the most

comfortable sort of security, but they will not exchange security for no matter how many tickets in the gleaming lottery of the world. They have not the quality of adventurousness. The advice against inhabiting grooves does not apply to this non-adventurous category of excellence.



The trouble about discussing how to make the best of life is that one is forced to make so many excursions into the obvious. The failure to make the best of life is due, as often as not, to the neglect of the conspicuously obvious—to the omission to do some perfectly simple thing which everybody agrees ought to be done, or to the commission of some perilous imprudence which everybody agrees ought to be very carefully avoided. It is as if, before entering a house, the candidate for success had to be warned not to try to walk through a closed and locked door, or, having begun to live in the house, had to be exhorted to take his clothes off at night and put them on in the morning, to eat at regular intervals, to refrain from debauchery—had even to be told that in order to sustain life he must breathe.

Now, for the youth starting upon an independent existence, extracting for the first time a live-

lihood from the world, depending on his own efforts for all his own necessities and luxuries, there is one elementary safeguard which he positively ought to take. I hesitate to name it, because it is so elementary. I blush to name it, and yet I am bound to name it, for the reason that a very large proportion of people calmly and persistently ignore it. He positively ought to save. You all agree, of course. Naturally and inevitably, he ought to save. The whole adult population of the civilised globe is aware of that! But does he in fact save? I will tell you. The majority of young men first seriously think of saving when they set eyes on a young woman who pleases their fancy in an unusual degree. When the greatest force in Nature compels the average young man to admit in his heart that he is undone unless he becomes the husband of a particular girl, and makes himself responsible for her future as well as his own, then he says to himself, with the effect of a sudden, startling discovery:

“By Jove! I must begin saving at once!”

And he begins. It is rather late in the day, for he does not want a long engagement, and you cannot ordinarily purchase the furniture of a love-nest out of the savings of six months or a year—hence the hire-purchase system!—but,

thank Heaven, he does begin. A shock has revealed to him, at any rate, one profound economic truth which had been staring him in the face perhaps for years, but which he had in some mysterious way failed to see. The shock was equivalent to an operation for cataract. I am less sure about the thrift of young women, but my impression is that it is not superior to that of young men.

From the first moment when he assumes control of his budget, the youth ought to commence saving, and he ought consistently to continue to save. No matter how small his revenue, he ought to save. If saving involves depriving himself of cigarettes, cinemas, fancy socks, or butter upon his bread, still he ought to save, he ought to perform a miracle and save. He may be able to save only a very little, a trifle, a mere nothing—he ought to save. It is the habit of saving that counts, not the sum saved.

Savings are a weapon which no one can afford to disdain. The world is a dark forest infested by brigands and tigers; savings are the gun of defence. Without savings a man is at the mercy of an illness, an accident, a war, a trade collapse, the caprice of an employer. And there are tens of thousands of individuals, and not only young

individuals, in London and New York to-day who have nothing between themselves and calamity but the coins in their pockets and the wages due to them next Saturday. This is a strange and very disconcerting fact, but a fact it is. The bulk of these tens of thousands of individuals are careless fools, guilty of the lunacy of the man who smokes a cigarette in a petrol store. It is all obvious. Yet, though I blush for writing it down, I do not apologise.

Further, and in addition to saving in liquid money, the youth ought to insure his life. Insurance companies, who have cultivated the craft of plausibility to an amazing degree, affirm to the youth that it is cheaper to insure oneself when young. I once asked an insurance manager to explain to me why insurance companies treated the young man more favourably than the old. I enquired whether they did it for the fun of the thing or from a high-minded intention to improve the moral character of the race. He naturally had to admit in reply that insurance companies do not treat the young more favourably than the old, and that they treat people of all ages in precisely the same hard, business-like style. It is not cheaper to insure young than old. So far as his relations with the insurance company goes, the

insured person has no advantage whatever in insuring young. He pays lower premiums, but he pays more of them; the insurance company gets the same amount of money in the end.

As regards himself, however, the youth has a very considerable advantage in insuring. To insure is a dodge for compelling himself to save. Further, an insurance policy provides automatically the readiest and cheapest method of borrowing money that exists. I do not urge the youth to borrow money; I hope that he will not borrow money; but cases of forced borrowing to meet disagreeable and totally unexpected crises do, I believe, occur! Another advantage of the insurance policy, in the United Kingdom, is that the premiums paid can be deducted from income-tax returns. A few years ago income-tax was something that youths had only heard of. To-day, happy is the youth who has not come into affrighting contact with the Income-tax Collector!

The varieties of insurance are many; but they may be divided roughly into two classes, the policy payable at death and the "endowment" policy. The latter is payable at a given age, or at death if it happens earlier, or after the payment of an agreed number of premiums. The endowment policy seems to me to be preferable to the policy

payable at death. It is very conceivable that one may seriously need money at the age of fifty or sixty, and if fortunately one does not, one can always re-invest the assured sum in another policy, or in other ways known to science. And it occurs not infrequently that the insured person survives the relatives for whose sake he has insured himself: in which case he may have a longing to handle the money in his own lifetime; he may go so far as to ask of what use the money will be to him in the grave where bodily needs are so few and luxuries so superfluous.

The above two points are not, perhaps, the major essentials of the youth's budget; but they are essentials which for years are neglected more frequently than any other essentials, and that is why I have given prominence to them.

As for the individual budget generally, I will merely say that it must be conceived and planned as a whole, as a life's career must be conceived and planned, with a right sense of proportion, and with two eyes upon the main objects of existence. One part must not be starved at the expense of another. Pinching will be unavoidable; inadequacy will be unavoidable; but the pinching and the inadequacy must be equally distributed. For example, I would not advise a youth to aban-

don smoking entirely in order to buy books (unless, of course, smoking is unpleasant to him). I would advise him to miss a book occasionally in order to buy a cigarette occasionally—while counting his cigarettes a hundred times more strictly than his books.



And now I want to put myself right, beyond the chance of misunderstanding, with those who may think that I am stressing too much the material part of existence, and who may be likely to say that there are far more important matters in life than income and expenditure, and that these matters, being more important, should come first. I agree that the moral, intellectual, artistic, and emotional parts of life have more to do with happiness and right living than the merely material. I agree, for example, that it is more important for a man to act justly and benevolently towards his fellows than for him to manage his budget scientifically, to eat good food, to lie on a comfortable bed, or to be well dressed according to his own station. But I maintain that it is quite possible, and indeed proper, for a man to attend to all sides of his life, and that exactly as the mental existence must depend primarily on the

physical existence, the whole of the finer and more exalted activities must be based upon a sound material activity.

Further, I maintain that to earn one's living skilfully and well, and to spend or save one's money in the same way, satisfies a fundamental natural instinct which cannot be satisfied otherwise. All the vague talk which one hears about living on a higher plane and despising the material plane is to my mind dangerously wrong-headed. Nobody can live on the higher plane without living also on the material plane. Nobody can cut himself off from the material plane and swim, as it were, unsupported in a spiritual atmosphere. The thing is against Nature, and patently absurd.

Take the extreme case of a religious community which exists for contemplation, prayer, redemption, and everlasting welfare, and the members of which are said to have "cut themselves off from the world." They have not cut themselves off from the world. I say nothing whatever against such communities, which may well be performing a very lofty function in the immensely complex organism of human society. But the members thereof have not cut themselves off from the world, nor from the material system of the

world. The clothes they wear, the food they eat, the coal that warms them, the chairs they sit on, the buildings they inhabit, are all an immediate product of the material system. They have been made by human units of the material system. If the community enjoys an income, as it does, that income is material; it springs from material activities, and it is possessed by the community because somebody who amassed the capital or obtained the land by purely material activities thought fit to make a present of it to the community. If the material system goes wrong, and in so far as it goes wrong, the higher activities of the community will go wrong. And, in fact, it is well known that the directing heads of such communities are deeply occupied, and must be deeply occupied, by material questions. And they occupy themselves with material questions to the end that the higher activities which they control may smoothly prosper. Instead of being cut off from the material world they are closely engaged within the material world; and they have a reputation, not undeserved, for exceptional ability in the conduct of material affairs. And they are quite right.

Many other instances might be given of repudiation of the material part of existence which is

not in fact repudiation at all. I need not enlarge upon the case of the fashionable lady with a husband making fifty thousand a year out of the commercial system, two houses, three motor-cars, and thirty servants, who gives herself ecstatically and totally to the study of the problems of spiritualism. But I ought to mention the case of the young poet, painter, or musician, with a passion for his art, who scorns what he probably calls the "gross materialism" of the world which he adorns. I have met many specimens of this young man. In the first place he is generally in debt. That is to say, he has entered into commercial contracts—for the occupation of a studio, the purchase of meat and beer, the hire of a piano—which contracts he has broken. In other words he is dishonest, having got what he could out of the despised materialism and then omitted to pay for it. Or in still other words, he has by false pretences contrived to cause human units in the commercial system to labour for his well-being while doing nothing himself for them in return. This young man will deliberately and with misrepresentation borrow money from defrauded friends, which money comes directly out of the commercial system.

And though he may exhibit a certain careless-

ness about his meals and his bed, he often depends very much upon the quality and quantity of his drinks, and he nearly always depends absolutely upon his cigarettes, which cigarettes are gross, physical cigarettes, manufactured and distributed by human units in the commercial system, on the clear understanding that the business shall help to keep together the souls and bodies of those human units.

The young man is frequently very idle, because he has never taken the trouble to organise his physical life; and his days being unorganised, irregular, and mainly empty, he develops into a capricious creature with a gradually decreasing control over his lower instincts. And even so, in as far as he continues to exist, he is utterly dependent on the physical mechanisms which he affects to scorn while defrauding them.

The fact that this young man may produce something good, or even a masterpiece, now and then, is beside the point. He will produce whatever he produces in spite and not because of his dishonest philosophy of life. He would certainly produce much more and much better if he had had the sense to realise that only gasbags can idly float in the air—and even they for not more than a limited period!

I would not like to attach an undue importance to the business of "getting on" in a material sense. There are human beings—and they may be very fine human beings, they may be the finest of all human beings—who have no worldly ambition and only the least possible interest in the physical side of life, using the word "physical" in a wide significance. They find the satisfaction of their best instincts in the mind and the soul; it is a matter of indifference to them whether they are employers or employed, whether they are counted successful or unsuccessful, whether they clean their own boots or are waited upon by innumerable menials, whether they eat bread or caviare, whether they live in palaces or huts, whether they spend two hundred or twenty thousand a year. Such human beings, though they suffer the inevitable disadvantages of being peculiar, are singularly fortunate, partly because they are singularly independent and partly because the quality of the happiness they strive after and often achieve is purely spiritual or intellectual.

But even these cannot safely neglect the physical basis of existence; they cannot safely muddle their budgets, and if by carelessness or self-conceit they take more from the physical world

than they give to the physical world, their ideals will be smirched and they will suffer in precisely that which is most precious to them.

And for the far larger number of us, who wish to succeed in a general way, whether in commerce, the learned professions, the arts or the sciences, the proper organisation of the budget, the common matter-of-fact worldly budget, should be the first preoccupation. The relations of any individual with the world at large are decided, not by the private canons of the individual, but by the canons of the world at large.

None of us can deal with the world in his own terms. Security must be paid for by the strictest adherence to the principles laid down by the experience of mankind gathered and matured through scores of centuries. If those principles are ignored friction will be the certain result, and the amount of the friction will vary with the extent of the ignoring. Friction, no matter how simple or absurd its origin, will interfere with and sometimes scotch the highest activities of the brain. If a youth, endeavouring to live rightly, omits to have his boots mended he may catch a chill on a wet day which will spoil his chances for a crucial examination. How can anybody devote himself wholly to the pursuit of a vast scheme in-

volving his whole career if his mind is to be continually pulled away from the supreme subject by petty anxieties about rent-day, or the bill at the grocer's, or the painful condition of teeth whose warnings have been disregarded? He simply cannot. The proposition has only to be stated to carry conviction. The biggest things in life depend on the smallest things. That is why the smallest things, the prosaic and humdrum things, the things that superior spirits are so apt impatiently to scorn, need to be handled with the same efficiency as the greatest things.

V

FALLING IN LOVE

I WONDER how many people grow up with the fixed idea that love is a thing which human intelligence cannot effectively control? The percentage of citizens—and especially Anglo-Saxon citizens—thus deceived about a vital matter must be very large. We probably get our notions concerning love and falling in love from the sentimental drawing-room ballad, which, at any rate in Britain, has an immense influence over the private dreams of the population. (There is no sentimental drawing-room ballad in France—or none to speak of, and the institution of the ballad concert is entirely unknown there.)

In the sentimental drawing-room ballad one special girl awaits one special young man; they meet by accident or by the will of the gods; at the meeting she looks into his eyes, he into hers; a miracle happens; and they both know that from that moment their two lives were changed for ever and ever, and also that no other girl could have

had the wondrous effect that that special girl had on that special youth, and *vice versa*. They know further that the affair could not have been avoided, love being a sort of inscrutable higher power tyrannising over human beings, and that nothing on earth matters except the one supreme fact of love.

The sentimental drawing-room ballad regards love as mankind used to regard disease and pestilence—that is to say, as a visitation, vastly more agreeable, of course, than an epidemic of small-pox, but nevertheless a visitation, which mortals did not cause and cannot cure—something similar to a thunderstorm or a flood. All delusions have some basis of truth, and the delusion propagated by the sentimental drawing-room ballad can occasionally find justification for itself in certain very odd and striking phenomena; but broadly speaking it does not at all correspond to life as we know life, and it has been the cause of more unhappy and tedious marriages than anything else since marriage was invented. I might put the case more strongly, but I will not do so, lest I should anger the ballad-loving Anglo-Saxon public, who love to dwell upon the alleged awful ravages of love, and upon the helplessness of love's victims, and upon the futility of trying to escape

love when Love has made up his mind to have you.

Falling in love, being in love, loving—three stages of a single process—constitute often an exceedingly fine experience, possibly the finest of all worldly experiences. The experience, however, does not lie entirely beyond human control. Nor is it generally, or often, productive of more happiness than unhappiness. It sometimes is, but not frequently. This statement contains no cynicism; it is the fruit of quite benevolent observation, and few really mature impartial observers would challenge it. I am, nevertheless, well aware that it will infuriate a considerable proportion of readers—men as well as women.

Love, despite the sentimental drawing-room ballad, is usually determined by individual circumstances of a material kind. For example, if a man who has been too poor to marry comes into a sufficient income, the chances are a hundred to one that soon afterwards he will be in love with some likely girl. You may argue that the thing was a coincidence, and that he would have been in love with that young woman anyhow. But is it not far more probable that he fell in love because he was ready to fall in love—in other words, because he had deliberately prepared himself to fall in love?

Similarly, a man who begins to find life a bore will fall in love.

And, conversely, a man who finds his existence full and interesting, an ambitious man, will not fall in love. He misses the visitation because he does not want it.

Again, a man who has been baulked in a love affair will fall in love a second time within a brief period, for the reason that he wanted, not a particular girl, but love itself. He had tasted it and he was determined to get his fill of it.

Instances could easily be multiplied to illustrate the broad truth that people who want to fall in love will fall in love, and those who don't won't. So far from Cupid running after you with a bow and arrow, you must run after Cupid and bare your breast and entreat the fellow to shoot if you desire to feel the dart. I admit willingly that there are exceptions to this proposition. Now and then an individual may be positively struck down by love in a highly inconvenient and even tragic manner. He may curse, and strive against it, and still be conquered by it. But this individual is very rare—save in ballads.

As for the ballad theory that every youth and every girl has his or her particular "fate," and unless or until he or she meets that "fate" his or

her life cannot be "fulfilled," it is as certain as anything human can be that in the average happy marriage the husband would have been equally happy with any one of ten thousand other women, and the wife with any one of ten thousand other men. (And when I say ten thousand I am understating!) The choice of a partner is seldom due to aught but fortuitous circumstances. If each individual has his "fate," it is extremely curious that his fate so often happens to be living in the same town, or even in the same street!

Am I seeking to rob life and love of their romance? Assuredly I am not. Life and love are incredibly and incurably romantic, and the more honestly you examine them the more romantic they seem. A man does not "find" his fate. He takes a woman—one of tens of thousands—and gradually fashions her *into* his unique fate. Is not this astonishing process more romantic than the prosaic business of lighting on her by accident ready-made?

That nearly every man has a very large measure of control over the love which may make or spoil him cannot be doubted. In order effectively to exercise that control he must give his mind to the subject of love and its probable influence upon his career. This does not mean that he must

spend his days in dreaming of the delights of love. It means that he must begin by putting certain questions to himself and answering them as sincerely as he can. On the other hand, it does not mean that he must try to lay down a plan of love as he might lay down the plan of a career. No! Love is a ticklish and incalculable affair; it cannot be reduced to a formula; it cannot, without absurdity, be approached exclusively in a spirit of pure logic; it may easily upset the schemes of hard common sense. But it is in general amenable to the suggestions of sagacity. And, seeing its importance, its beauty, its magnificence, its romance, its immense consequences, every effort should be made by the reasoning faculty to guide it wisely.

Now the young man who is not a fool will first decide whether or not he is ready for love. He will deliberately decide it; and no jeering of sentimentalists shall move me from this statement.

Is it better to marry earlier or later? It is unanswerably better to marry earlier, provided that the material basis for marriage exists. It is better because it is more natural, because it is more healthy, because it is more agreeable, because the young more easily accommodate themselves to one another, and because their offspring

have in every way a better chance on earth.

But none of these considerations can properly weigh against the absence of a suitable material basis. If the income of the married couple would be inadequate to the needs of wedlock and is without a fair prospect of improvement, or if the income is precarious and unreliable, then no marriage can rightly take place, despite anything that ballads may assert to the contrary.

And if no marriage can rightly take place, then the young man must decide that he is not ready for love, and get himself into a frame of mind accordingly. The frame of mind duly arrived at, he will be much less liable to fall in love, no matter how splendid may be the girls he meets! Thus he will save himself, and perhaps another, from a lot of trouble which a less prudent young man might unreflectingly tumble into.

Of course, there may be cases in which a young man who has both the material basis and the desire for marriage would still be foolish to adopt the frame of mind favourable to love. Such a case is that of the ambitious man who has sworn to rise high in the world. If this man marries young he may discover that his wife, through no fault of her own, is incapable of rising with him. Too early marriages have marred the lives of

countless ambitious men—and of not a few ambitious women.



Let us assume that a young man is in a position to marry, and that he has reflected, not unfavourably, about the state of marriage, and that he has the ordinary facilities for encountering young women. That young man is almost certain to meet fairly soon a young woman concerning whom his first thought will be: "She is not a bad sort." We say: "He has taken a fancy to her," but the situation would be more correctly described by the words: "His fancy has been taken."

Now here is the moment of peril. If at this moment circumstances arose which prevented him from ever seeing the girl again, he would not suffer. No harm has been done. The strange little microbe is only on the surface as yet; it has not penetrated into the system; it can be brushed off. Reason and judgment are still in control of the proceedings. The young man ought to realise, and can easily realise by an effort of detachment, that he is playing with fire. He ought to realise that he may be at a crisis of his life, and that within the next few weeks things may have happened in his heart which will affect profoundly

the whole of his career. He ought not to conduct himself lightly.

Yet few young men do in fact realise these matters. The average young man just goes carelessly on, listening to his fancy alone. He will see that girl again. He does see her again. In a couple of months, even if not betrothed, his affections may be so deeply involved that reason has ceased to be in command of the proceedings. He no longer sees the girl as she is; he sees the idealised image of her which love has created in his heart. He no longer sees the pros and cons of the tremendous and endless enterprise which we call marriage; he sees only the pros, and he sees them greatly exaggerated.

The affair, of course, may turn out excellently well; but if it does he is lucky—not meritorious, because he has neglected the early precautions which he ought to have taken.

The lesson is: that if reason is to act in a love affair, it must act in the earliest stages, or it cannot act at all. By deliberate thought and intention reason can be made to act, and its operation will be invaluable.

How should reason act? At the very start, before the matches have even been brought into the chamber where the powder-barrel lies, the young man should say to himself:

"I am thinking about that girl. Before I go any farther let me think seriously and widely; dreaming about the attractiveness of her is not serious thinking. I must stand on one side and try to see the situation as a third person would see it."

The first point for his attention is this: From the inception of any love affair, a continuous process of falsification is going on. The girl is showing the best of herself and hiding the worst of herself. She cannot help doing so. Sometimes she does it unconsciously, but as a rule she does it quite deliberately. She is anxious to please; she is anxious to be esteemed and liked—whether or not she regards the young man favourably as a suitor. He is not seeing the girl in full, and it is impossible that he should see her in full. And even the carefully selected portions of her individuality which he does see are seen by him through the rose-coloured glasses of his excited fancy. If he marries her he is certain to experience disillusion, because he has been asking for it.

Further, the young man himself, precisely like the girl, is showing the best of himself and hiding the worst of himself. Both parties, therefore, are being continuously misled, and the disillusion will be mutual.

Let the young man reflect upon this, so that his enthusiasm may be duly tempered. Let him also reflect that, just as in the project of marriage he is "out" mainly for his own interests, so is the girl "out" for her own interests. Drawing-room ballads notwithstanding, love and self-interest are quite compatible. The simple realisation of this unquestionable truth will help the young man to judge with more reason and less passion than otherwise he could do.

A great deal depends upon the circumstances in which the first meetings occur. If these, as often happens, are in a resort of pleasure, the difficulties of true judgment are gravely increased. A girl who is ideal at a social entertainment may be a very different girl in the eternal dailiness of marriage. (And be it ever remembered that marriage is about seventy-five per cent. humdrum, twenty per cent. troublesome complications, and a bare five per cent. festivity of one kind or another.)

The girl is excited. The young man is excited. The material available for wise judgment is very meagre. The young man, however, can trust to at any rate three symptoms. If she is obviously a devotee of pleasure, beware, for she cannot fail to be disappointed—with the usual

results upon character. If she shows no thought for what he is spending with her or on her, beware, for either she is selfish or she is incapable of putting herself in his place. Thirdly, if she speaks ill of women in general, beware, for she is a woman herself. And in this connection I will add that if the young man catches himself thinking that by a most fortunate chance she is free from the characteristic feminine faults, let him rule out the notion instantly. She is not. No woman is. A woman may have these faults in a greater or less degree, but she has them, and if the young man does not discover this soon he will discover it too late. The same, naturally, is true of men. (Yes, young man, all men, including yourself, have characteristic masculine defects of character.)

If the early meetings occur in a place of business, under business conditions, the chances of a sound judgment are considerably strengthened. But the young man should see the young woman in her own home, difficult though this often is to arrange in the preliminary stages. And if her own home is not satisfactory, let him guard against imagining that she has escaped all the faults of her family. She hasn't; and to imagine such an absurdity is a sure symptom that the

young man is losing his head and his reasoning faculty about her.

In any case, the young man should take measures, however awkward they may be, to see her in prosaic circumstances, and circumstances which are apt to be trying for her, circumstances which ordinarily do bring to the surface the roots of the character. He can even create these circumstances himself.

And, lastly, he should meditate upon the possibility that he is not the seeker but the sought. He may fancy that he is about to choose the girl, whereas the fact is that the girl is about to choose him. He may conceive himself as playing the active *rôle*, whereas in truth he may be playing the passive *rôle*. The nature of men and women is such that a girl can just as easily select and mark down and capture a man as a man can select and mark down and capture a woman. Provided that a girl has a fair amount of charm and is suitably situated as regards material conditions, she can, in my firm belief, win almost any man she chooses—and this without in the least departing from the rules laid down by society for the deportment of nice girls.

There are those who will here protest, and perhaps violently, that, in spite of my previous as-

surances to the contrary, I am, as a fact, in the above suggestions, committing an outrage upon love, trying to make love a matter of cold calculation, and Heaven knows what else. But it is not so. I wish merely to insist, first, that love is not uncontrollable in its first manifestations, and, second, that, while it is controllable, it ought in the interests of individual and general happiness to be controlled so far as possible by the guidance of reason.

Love is, I believe, the greatest and the finest phenomenon in human life; its influence is tremendous; nothing transcends it in importance. Why should reason and deliberate judgment be excluded from it at the very moment when they can make themselves useful? Some people seem to think that it is a grand thing to throw oneself blindly into romantic danger and to risk the welfare of a lifetime in an hour of abandonment. I do not agree, and I doubt whether the said persons are wholly sincere. I behold them as the victims of the sentimental drawing-room ballad. Reason, I admit, cannot do everything in love. No man, however young and omniscient, can completely arrange his heart's destiny by taking thought. Love cannot be treated as an algebraic equation. But Reason can emphatically do some-

thing—and something worth doing—to lessen the risks of a disaster, if only she is called into consultation soon enough.



So far I have, at any rate in appearance, regarded the matter from the man's point of view; and in the acid judgment of ardent feminists I may have had the air of treating the wonderful preliminaries to marriage as a struggle of calculation in which the man should be encouraged to do the very best he can for himself while ignoring the claims of the woman. Such is not my attitude. Nearly all the suggestions which I have offered for the conduct of young men I would offer with equal vehemence for the conduct of girls in this great and critical affair; and indeed, with the necessary changes of detail, they can obviously be applied with at least as much force to the woman's case as to the man's. If a man should give heed, a woman should give more heed.

Some say that modern social conditions have fundamentally changed the girl's relation to the man. They have changed it, but not fundamentally. In essentials it remains the same as it was. A girl can now earn her own living; she has freedom, including the freedom to think for her-

self; she is not so afraid as she used to be of becoming an old maid. She has a far larger choice of men than her ancestress, merely because she goes about more. True! But she cannot earn her own living as well as a man; with all her new freedom she has less freedom than a man; and she still has a horror of becoming an old maid, whereas men still contemplate with perfect calm the prospect of becoming old bachelors. The crucial fact is that maidens still hanker after the wedded state a great deal more than young men do. Further, there are more maids than young men.

The theory, launched in various quarters, that girls are no longer particularly interested in marriage, that they prefer their salaried work to the hard labour of housekeeping and rearing children, and that if the truth were known they would prefer not to marry—this theory does not at all accord with the evidence of my eyes daily seen. I am quite ready to call it a grotesque theory, invented by persons whose visual organs are in grave need of an oculist. The differences of sex survive, and are likely to continue to survive for quite some years yet.

Girls have immense advantages; on their own ground men cannot touch them. A beautiful or

a charming girl, in order to be admired, has simply to *be*; a man, in order to be admired, must *do*. And the husband, in the majority of marriages, has the sole financial responsibility; the wife's responsibility in spending is less serious in the same degree as creating is less serious than dissipating. On the other hand, girls have immense disadvantages. They grow old! For many of them, if not for most, this is a genuine tragedy. Their share in the vast business of producing the next generation is incomparably heavier than that of men. And also, whatever their financial independence may have been before marriage, they generally lose it after marriage. Financially, the average wife is little better than helpless.

On the whole, I consider that the disadvantages of being a woman outweigh the advantages. I think that women, during the major part of their lives, have a somewhat harder time of it than men. I have not yet met a man who really regretted that he had not been born a woman; but I have met many and many a woman who really regretted that she had not been born a man.

Finally, marriage is always a captivity; it may be and often is delightful, unique in its satisfactoriness; but it is a captivity, and sometimes a terrible captivity. And nearly invariably it is

more of a captivity for the wife than for the husband.

Hence we arrive at the triple conclusion: that maidens desire marriage more than men do; that, being numerically superior, they have a more restricted choice than men; and that as a consequence of her financial dependence and of her liabilities as a mother, an unsuccessful marriage will bear more hardly upon the wife than upon the husband.

I maintain, therefore, that the girl has more cause even than the young man to bring her reason into play immediately and without the slightest delay when her affections begin to be engaged. I doubt whether a woman is less calculating than a man before her affections are caught, but I am quite sure that, once her affections are caught, she can be more devoted than a man, more sacrificial, and more capable of grief.

It would be absurd to attempt general advice to women about men. Tastes differ infinitely, and there are mysteries in marriage incomprehensible save to the two people chiefly concerned. No one can safely predict that a given man will not prove satisfactory to a given woman.

But one generalisation may be suggested with-

out excessive rashness. Beware of any man whom men do not like. Such men often please women; they absolutely fascinate women; they seem to mesmerise; they are adored to the point of ecstasy. But never for long. A moment always comes when the woman learns, as a rule to her cost, that the general masculine judgment was right. There may be exceptions to this rule, but for myself I have not met one.

I would venture no other generalisation. All else that can be said in this connection amounts to a vague warning against shutting the eyes and rushing forward until the heart has obtained complete control and reason has been reduced to a nonentity.

A queer false shame adversely influences the earthly relations of a man and a girl who have at the back of their minds some idea of ultimately marrying each other. And the girl usually has more of this false shame than the man. Conversations, instead of being serious, are superficial; and the exhibition of a legitimate curiosity on vital matters is genteelly avoided. The girl should acquire knowledge concerning not merely the financial status of the possible man, but about his health and about his tastes, particularly about

his tastes. For she will be more at the mercy of his tastes than he of hers.

Of course, no social interchanges can go on without some useful information being obtained. And yet it is astonishing, it is pathetic, the small quantity of information that actually is obtained. Lots of couples enter into the most solemn compact that exists and they know no more of each other than their respective preferences in furniture and in theatrical entertainments. And even this they would not know were it not necessary to pass evenings somewhere and to buy furniture for houses and flats. I would blame the girl a little more than the young man for this mutual ignorance, because—especially in the first stages of acquaintance—the relations are directed mainly by the girl, whose wishes are by convention deferred to, and who also is more likely than the man to keep her head in any social encounter.

And now, when, for good or evil, the choice has been made and the compact sealed, the young woman should bethink herself conscientiously of a matter which has a greater influence upon the success or failure of marriage than anything else lying outside the affections. Before he is accepted as a *fiancé*, the young man must put his

cards on the table. He must reasonably demonstrate his ability to maintain a wife and a household in a satisfactory manner. If he cannot demonstrate this there is trouble, and he may be asked what he impudently means by expecting a girl accustomed to comfort and all the proprieties to entrust herself to his incompetent arms. He expects to be called upon for this demonstration, and neither he nor anybody else is surprised at the insistence on the ordeal. But supposing that, when the couple had arrived at an unspoken or spoken understanding, the young man's mother were to send for the young woman and say to her: "You want to marry my son. Which means that you will have to run his house for him and bring up his children. I must request you to prove to me that you can run a house, manage servants, buy food economically, cook it attractively, make rooms attractive, keep order, be punctual," etc., etc.

Naturally the girl would be startled.

But she would have no right to be startled. The error into which innumerable girls fall is of expecting the man to bring various important things to the marriage while forgetting that they, too, have responsibilities to discharge and duties to fulfil in an accomplished manner. Girls are

too apt to imagine that in giving their hearts they have given all that the mutual bargain of marriage demands from them. It very emphatically is not so.

Love is enormous; but love is not enough. To be a wife is a profession, and a skilled and a learned profession at that. While she is engaged in loving, the young woman should also be engaged in more material and earthly affairs. And you may cry out against reason and practicality and mechanical household efficiency as much as you please—there is nothing like these for supporting and preserving love in its fight against time.

The tendency of the age is towards marriages of reason. A good tendency! But courtships of reason are equally to be desired.

VI

MARRIAGE

OF all human enterprises marriage is the most serious and has the greatest effect upon the lives of the performers. There may be cases in which a self-centred man of very powerful individuality and very mild affections espouses a cipher or a living "Yes, dear," and continues his development and career seemingly uninfluenced by the fact of marriage; but even in such cases the influence, though indirect or merely negative, can be traced. As for the majority of men, marriage tremendously, vitally, and unalterably transforms their existence. And all women who marry, with scarcely an exception, accomplish the supreme personal and social act of their destiny. Two events only are more momentous to a woman than marriage. The first is her birth, over which she has no control, and the second is her death, over which she has but little control. These statements are all platitudes.

Yet some people, including some women, appear to undertake marriage with the careless nonchalance of birds.

Nobody at all fully realises at first the immense gravity and difficulty of the affair. Perhaps it is just as well that nobody does—otherwise there might be a disastrous decline in the marriage-rate, and organised society might fall into ruin sooner than even the most pessimistic prophets have predicted. Marriage, indeed, despite its seriousness, must not be treated too seriously all the time. Imagine a newly wedded couple whose continual uppermost thought was: "We are in a situation of extreme difficulty and delicacy. Our daily acts are heavy with the gravest consequences." What a household the precious pair would make! Marriage as we know it may be, and often is, a mighty queer business, but on the whole the institution works. It might work better, but it works. And it works because it has slowly developed with the slow development of society. In the main it suits and fits us at our present stage of evolution. I have no sympathy with those who cry out that marriage is a failure, or that marriage is slavery, calamity, tragedy, hell, and that something ought to be immediately done about it. Such violent

exclamations usually issue from persons who happen themselves to have found acute unhappiness in marriage—innocently or through their own fault. No institution can fairly be condemned because it breaks down utterly in a small minority of instances. Justice for the majority is bound to be unjust to a minority. No system of finance could be conceived which would not involve a few bankruptcies. Surgery now and then proves fatal. And similarly with marriage.

To listen to some malcontents one would suppose that in their opinion marriage alone among human institutions ought to be perfect or perish. Put this simple question to a hundred men and a hundred women after twenty years of marriage: "Do you regret it?" Not ten of the men and not five of the women would honestly reply that they did. And herein is a fair test of the matter. No! I will not subscribe to the theory that marriage is an ordeal to daunt the bravest. There is a credit balance to marriage, and it is entitled to rank rather high among the achievements of human sagacity.

Still, the situation with its difficulties has to be faced. And the average situation is somewhat as follows: The parties to the vast enterprise are suddenly thrown into an extreme form of inti-

macy. Now an extreme intimacy makes a heavy demand on skill and patience in the art of living, especially when the collaborators have had no experience of such an intimacy. I will say nothing of the honeymoon, which in spite of its satisfactions and ecstasies generally needs the most careful handling, and which rarely passes without disconcerting emotional and other phenomena highly surprising to the two innocents. Honeymoons, in fact, not seldom end worse than they began, and to recover from them may take quite a long time. I will assume that the honeymoon has been ideal: which not one honeymoon in a hundred ever is. At the close of it the undergraduates of life find themselves in a home, amid furniture and fitments, and in an atmosphere, which is strange to both of them. Further, they find themselves necessarily forced into a whole set of novel habits, and these habits are of all sorts, important and trifling, dangerous and safe, agreeable and trying. All is changed, even to the cookery. To persuade the raw, creaking machinery of the household to run smoothly would in itself be a stiff task, and might justly be described as a whole-time job for any able-minded pair; but it is naught compared to the management of the intimacy itself. Mere acquaintances might

succeed pretty well in the mechanics of the job when intimates preoccupied with their intimacy would fail. The household machine reacts on the intimacy, and *vice versa*. Everything that occurs in the household affects, and is affected by, the intimacy.

By accident the toast is like leather. Well, acquaintances would agree calmly that the toast was like leather, and that would be that. But in an extreme form of intimacy boot-soles stuffed into a toast-rack feed the mind with subtle poison, and though the symptoms may be genteelly suppressed the pathological condition is there, and the malady works underground in the manner of a mole. It will inevitably be so, let the delicious simpletons feign as much as they please that boot-soles in a toast-rack are really rather a lark. The simpletons relate everything to the intimacy, and for each unsatisfactory phenomenon they discover a disturbing cause and foresee a disturbing effect.

Nothing whatever is unimportant in the intimacy. The faculties are fully engaged all the time. And privacy, that safeguard in days of stress, exists no more. One simpleton cannot say to the other:

“Look here, I want to think things over and

collect myself. I'm going out for a solitary walk."

Such an announcement would be the equivalent of a shock of earthquake in the delicate household. Hence, in default of privacy—imperfectly concealed brooding!

Again, each simpleton is plotting against the other. The twain are in love; but love does not in the least prevent plotting against the beloved. They both say to themselves:

"My spouse is wonderful, and I adore him, or her; but in deep wisdom, knowledge of life, and truly practical skill, I am his, or her, superior. Therefore in his, or her, best interests, not to mention my own, it is my duty by wiles to impose my will upon his, or hers. I must maintain all kinds of pretences. I must be the offspring of the serpent and the dove."

You can now perceive that here is not exactly the material of perfectly mutual understanding, nor the method conducive thereto. And do not tell me that I am cynical or pessimistic about human nature, and that such deceitful carryings-on as I have just sketched are impossible where love reigns. They are notoriously possible. Moreover, love rarely reigns, save as a strictly limited constitutional monarch. Or, phrasing

it differently, love may reign but does not govern.

And the most terrible difficulty of all I have yet fearsomely to describe. In the average Anglo-Saxon marriage the parties are in love. They may be in love much or little, but some sort of love exists between them. Though this condition sometimes renders them more exacting in their demands, as a rule it renders them less exacting, and so in a general way makes things easier. But the mischief with being in love, as I have written in a previous chapter, is that it falsifies the judgment.

Only the other day a man of thirty, not without experience of life, seriously informed me that the girl to whom he had just engaged himself was in his deliberate and impartial opinion the finest girl in the world, and that neither he nor any other man could possibly be worthy of her. I did not commit the imprudence of combating this view. I lied, and forebore to tell him that no girl is the finest girl in the world, and that he was overrating this particular girl and underrating himself. It would have been futile for me to act differently. Shortly afterwards the girl expressed herself in similar terms to me about the man.

This example of a beautiful and touching illusion was not very unusual, and in a greater or less degree the illusion is present in the opening of the majority of marriages. It is right that the illusion should be there; the illusion is fine, and I would not for anything have it altered. But imagine the plight of two people who set out on the enormous adventure of living together handicapped by such an illusion. If the illusion would last for ever all would be well for ever. But it won't. The illusion originates from the state of being in love, and the state of being in love—save in the very rarest and most miraculous instances—is not permanent. It is indeed startlingly impermanent. I do not assert that people cannot and do not love each other steadfastly for a life time. But not one person in a hundred thousand remains “in love” for more than a relatively short period. Being in love involves passion, and passion is fleeting, and must be so. Passion cools into affection; often it cools into indifference; and occasionally it is transformed into detestation. These truths are disagreeable; but they are truths, and you will not do away with them by refusing to face them.

Whatever happens, the first illusions concerning the angelic character of the spouse are abso-

lutely certain to disappear. Truth will out, and impartial judgment will prevail. The day must dawn when the spouse will see the other spouse as he or she is seen by detached observers. Happily the process of disillusion is gradual. But it proceeds implacably from stage to stage. And remember that it starts when the parties are first confronted with their unexpected, or unrealised, difficulties, and when they have a special need of secret support. They are learning that marriage, after everything has been said that can be said in its favour, is also a bit of a predicament. They are astonished at the number and the acuteness of the new problems which it presents. They are saddened and perhaps discouraged to discover that it is scarcely more romantic than any other mode of existence, that indeed it can be disconcertingly and obstinately prosaic. They tremble as they admit to themselves that the mere material and moral responsibilities attached to it are terrific. And then, at the very crisis of the hidden confusion of spirit, they are grievously distressed by the slow vanishing of the supreme illusion concerning the partner!

They had desired a perfect partner, or a partner imperfect only in jolly, charming details; a partner different from anybody else; an arch-

angel of a partner. Such a partner was essential to their plans. Had they guessed that the partner was less than unique, they would never have married at all. And lo! The partner is imperfect in more than details; is fundamentally imperfect; is not unique, not different from anybody else—but rather like everybody else; in sum, disappointing.

I do not pretend to have pictured the whole of the psychological drama which passes in the minds of the partners in an average marriage. Far from it. I have confined myself to the darker portions of it. The general tone of the affair is much lighter and more agreeable. The average marriage is not by any means an unrelieved tragedy of disillusion. The worst that can be said of the average marriage is that it is much more disappointing, dull, tedious, prosaic than it need be. And if I have examined only certain unfavourable factors in it, I have done so because in the study of these factors lies the means of making a better thing of marriage.



Obviously the first thing to do is to take measures for making the romantic period of passion endure as long as possible and so arrange

that as and when it closes it shall develop into steadfast affection and not change into indifference or detestation.

Now in nearly all marriages one party soon begins to impose his will on the other. In a few, no doubt, the balance of power remains even, and a diarchy, which is a dual monarchy, exists; but in exceedingly few. The causes of the uneven division of practical power may be various. It may be due to the control of finance; it may be due to bad temper, which wins by its own unpleasantness; it may be due to health, good or bad; it may be due to other causes obscure and apparently trifling. But in most cases it is due to sheer force of individuality, which triumphs over all disadvantages.

You will see, for example, a wife who is plain and must depend upon her husband for all monetary supplies whatever, yet successfully imposing her will upon his will by simple moral power. As a rule it is the husband who is the stronger, not only in material but in moral power. In any event one of the two individualities will rise superior to the other, and this will happen as surely as water finds its level, and nothing will stop it, and each party will sooner or later accept the achieved fact.

It does not, however, follow that the secondary party likes or even accepts willingly the secondary *rôle*. The contrary is usually the case. There is a struggle, and the struggle is deleterious to love. In this struggle the superior, if he is wise, will never presume upon the love of the inferior to make short work of what ought to be long work. To do so is unjust; it is to take a mean advantage. And scarcely anything is more destructive of love than the sense of injustice. Naturally the inferior party may be guilty of injustice, may presume upon the love of the superior. But generally speaking the injustice proceeds from the impatience of the stronger partner. He—and in “he” I once more include “she”—will say to himself:

“She (or he) is in love with me and therefore she will give way, she will stick it, and it will be all right. I am sure of her whatever happens.”

But will it be all right? It may seem all right, and may really be all right—for a time. Love will withstand all manner of blows, yet every blow weakens. And love forgets willingly and eagerly, in the ordinary significance of the word “forget.” Nevertheless, that nothing received by the brain can be totally forgotten, erased, wiped clean off, is a scientific truth, amply

proved. And as love subsides, unfavourable impressions of the beloved will all of them infallibly revive, and will react weakeningly upon the already weakened love. The sense of injustice notoriously rankles. And although a person in love is capable of the most singular illusions or delusions about the object of his passion, still his reason somehow simultaneously registers a true judgment of the said object and puts it away into a locked drawer, and when the decline of love deprives the illusion or delusion of necessary nourishment, the dangerous drawer is unlocked and its sinister contents examined. All returns into the mind. And the result may be the birth of indifference or detestation, instead of calm affection.

All love, including maternal love, has this curious double faculty. In the secrecy of her brain, perhaps almost hidden from her heart, the mother will judge the unjust son as impartially as anybody. She is not genuinely deceived by him. And in regard to the son's interests it does not matter, because maternal love is usually pure, unselfish, and quite indestructible. The same cannot be said of conjugal love, which is an immensely more sensitive plant. Maternal love can safely be presumed upon. Conjugal love cannot

safely be presumed upon. The realisation of this axiom is one of the roots of successful marriage.



Let us now turn to the special *rôle* of the husband. The first and chief duty of the husband is to provide for the household the physical means of subsistence upon the scale which the wife is reasonably entitled to expect and which he has led her to expect. And from the start! My view is that nothing exceeds this in importance, and that nothing, in the end, bears a closer relation to the happiness or the unhappiness of the union. Love and bliss rarely survive penury. And when they do so, they do so only on the condition that the wife is an angel who does not mind being victimised, defrauded, deluded—call it what you like. In failing to provide the material basis of existence the husband breaks a very definite contract. The “marriage vow” has a wider significance than that which is attached to it in the matrimonial courts of justice. Nor is it fair for the husband to excuse himself by saying:

“I warned her that we should be poor for a long time, and she offered no objection.”

A girl will seldom draw back at such a warn-

ing, partly because she does not and cannot believe wholly in its seriousness, and partly because she is too proud and too loyal and too much in love with love. Ten years of cheese-paring poverty may leave the husband almost unscathed by time; but not the wife. Those ten years should be the best decade of the wife's career, and at the close of them, if they are lean years, she may well resemble a flower culled and then deprived of water. She may wear a brave face, but are you sure that in her heart the answer to the question: "Had you known beforehand would you have married all the same?" is not a decided negative?

Nor is it fair for the husband to excuse himself by saying, for instance:

"I have my career to think of. I am a painter, a composer, a barrister, and I know that I have only to wait in order to succeed."

His success would naturally react on the wife to her advantage, but not in more than a small degree. The wife's success and the husband's success are two different things, though connected. The wife may be forced to pay far too high a price for her modest share in her husband's success. The wife, in these cases of delayed prosperity, sacrifices for her husband; the

husband sacrifices for himself, which is infinitely easier. When success arrives the husband gets the glory; the wife gets merely reflected glory; the reward is unequal, and for the wife may be cruelly insufficient.

If the husband can only fulfil himself at the cost of inflicting undue privation and suffering on his wife, I maintain that in fulfilling himself he is committing a social crime, and I should think better of him if he abandoned the pursuit of glory in order by hook or by crook to keep his wife in comfort at the earliest possible moment. There are greater matters than personal success; a husband does not belong solely to himself, and he will not make the best of his life or of his wife's life by thinking exclusively of himself.

Again, one of the accepted maxims of marriage is that you should "begin as you mean to go on." I think that a better maxim would be: "Go on as you have begun." This applies to both partners, but perhaps rather more to the husband than to the wife. The husband, absorbed in self-fulfilment, is apt to argue, once again, in another connection:

"She is mine now, anyhow. I've got her. Hence I can safely neglect her."

Even if the reasoning were true, it is a pretty sort of reasoning for a respectable husband to indulge in! But it isn't true. She is his, materially. He has got her, materially. But in a deeper sense she is his, and he has got her, only so long as he takes the trouble to keep her. Husband and wife may continue to live together in fullest intimacy for years after the wife has ceased to be the husband's. A woman must be won afresh about once a week. Being won is ninety per cent. of her existence, and probably less than fifty per cent. of her husband's existence.

And the eternal winning is accomplished mainly by a constant attention to externals. Although the wife may be just as appreciative of essentials as the husband, she is certainly more appreciative of externals than he is, and more dependent on them. This is not her fault,—it is her nature, unalterable, and not a bit reprehensible.

The husband may neglect his wife in small things—he is criminally careless (while magnificently conscious of a profound unspoken affection for the neglected)! Few wives have much use for tongues that don't speak, lips that don't smile, eyes that don't glisten, arms that don't embrace. Their love is nourished on small outward symptoms of love in husbands. They gen-

erally remain girls even after ten children. The husband who forgets this has neither begun as he meant to go on, nor gone on as he began. He is a clumsy ignoramus with a twisted sense of values, and he has a blind spot for half of life.

Further, an otherwise excellent husband may gradually slip into the way of being an offence to the eye or the ear, or to both—he is wrong. He may by preoccupation and obstinacy fall into chronic bad health—he is a sinner (while pluming himself upon his devotion to an ideal, a cause, a profession). Let him think seriously upon trifles and upon externals.



As for the *rôle* of the wife, the material and practical side of it ought surely to be beyond the need of discussion. That the husband should be a skilled money-earner is, as I have pointed out in my remarks upon being betrothed, accepted as quite obvious, and it should be equally obvious that the wife should be a skilled housekeeper. Unfortunately the public opinion which rules the preparation for wifedom has not yet by any means laid it down that a wife must be a skilled housekeeper. I doubt if fifty per cent. of wives at this very day are skilled housekeepers. I

know that very many of them are grossly amateurish housekeepers. And nobody seems to mind much. If the husband minds, as he sometimes does, he says little, because public opinion fails to support him; and if he strangely doesn't mind, as he sometimes doesn't, the reason is that he has never been accustomed to expert housekeeping and does not know what it means.

The day will arrive when a wife who muddles any branch of the management of her house will be branded as the cheat and the waster which she clearly is. Efficient housekeeping, which signifies economical, enjoyable, nourishing, appetising, clean, and elegant housekeeping, is not an affair demanding genius. It can be achieved by any woman of average brains and average will-to-learn. It is really not more difficult than good dancing—and to-day the young woman who cannot dance well blushes (rightly) for her imperfection.

Now efficient housekeeping is another of the roots of conjugal happiness, and it is accordingly a highly important part of the wife's rôle.

But it is not the most important part. The wife cannot be content to be merely the administrator of the material home, or even the creator of the material home. Yet wives who know

themselves to be efficient housekeepers are too frequently so proud of their achievement that they can see nothing beyond it. (Nay, they are occasionally so proud that they consider the husband to be made for the home instead of the home for the husband; and the stricken man, caught in the ruthless wheels of one machine while at work, finds himself caught in the ruthless wheels of another machine while at rest!) The major part of the wife's *rôle* consists in creating and administering the home as a social organism.

The husband will naturally take some share in this business, but he has less time—and also less inclination—for the job than his wife. No amount of change in the relation of the sexes will appreciably affect the truth of the maxim that the wife's sphere is the home. If the home goes wrong for any reason other than a money-famine or some incurable vice of the husband's, the fault is the wife's fault. The wife must always be *thinking creatively* of the home as a social organism. Hers should be the care of saving it from dulness, monotony, narrowness, and ugliness. She is and forever will be the active centre of it. The home will take its colour and tone from her. Therefore her first duty is herself to be agreeable to the eye and to the ear. She will

not make the best of home and of marriage unless she makes the best of herself—at all hours. Think of what this involves.

And she absolutely must exercise charm, whether things are going right or going wrong. (Any chit can be charming when things are all going smoothly.) Women were born to exercise charm. Every one knows it and admits it. And the wife has no justification for failing to exercise charm until she is dead. A large proportion of women, especially pretty ones, suffer from the illusion that in order to exercise charm they need only continue to exist. A mistake! To exercise charm is an active and not a passive function. It cannot be efficiently done without thought and hard work. It is sometimes very trying and exhausting, like earning money,—but it is not less essential than earning money if life is to be fully lived. Let a wife devote herself to this marvellous personal enterprise, and the rest of the social running of the home—making and keeping a circle of friends, taming the brute that survives in most husbands, arranging diversions and diversity, and forty other things—will ensue with a surprising ease.

But even now we are only at the beginning of marriage.

VII

THE CONTINUATION OF MARRIAGE

MARRIAGES are apt to go wrong in their middle period, that is to say the period beginning ten or fifteen years after the wedding. I do not mean that they are apt to break up with violence and tragedy and scandal, for the average marriage survives everything but death, and I shall have no word to say here about those comparatively rare accidents of passion which lead to a regrettable publicity in the newspapers. I mean simply that marriages—and quite a large proportion of them—are apt to deteriorate or decline into unions of tedium, producing in both parties a sensation of grave disappointment not only with marriage as an institution but with life itself as an institution.

Such marriages owe their continuance less to inclination than to feelings of duty and to an apprehension of the immense difficulty and danger attendant upon any attempt to arrange a separa-

tion. They are kept together by dignity and prudence, and if dignity and prudence did not stand in the way the partners would in numerous instances soon be occupying separate establishments.

Yet there may be nothing fundamentally askew. The income may be sufficient; manners and tempers may be good; mutual respect may flourish; even affection, though dulled, may not have totally expired! The malady indeed is mysterious. And neither husband nor wife takes much trouble to unravel the mystery. The pair accept the state of affairs, as people used to accept the plague and infant mortality, as something beyond the cleverness of man to prevent or to cure.

This apathy concerning the greatest of human experiences is very serious. If the husband's business were going wrong he would hold an exhaustive inquiry; if the wife's housekeeping books showed a sinister leakage she would not rest until she had discovered the source of trouble. But since the problem affects naught but the daily, weekly, yearly happiness of two persons and the trend of their entire existence—it is neglected. We are so marvellously constructed! Is it not marvellous that a husband, that repository of

common sense, who well knows that his business is first and chiefly a means to live, should not exercise his sagacity upon the super-business of actual living? The singular fellow will put his brain into the work of eight hours whose aim is to enable him to enjoy the other sixteen hours,—and then will calmly suffer the lamentable dissatisfaction which poisons the sixteen hours without a serious effort to get to the bottom of it.

But perhaps even if both partners started to solve the mystery they would not succeed, for the same reason that people too frequently cannot see what is staring them in the face. The chances are that they would begin from false premises and arrive nowhere at all.

When no obvious reason can be perceived for the unsatisfactoriness of marriage in its middle stage, when the principal factors of contentment, such as affection, respect, fair health, politeness, sane habits, and suitable income are all undeniably present,—and yet the result is a corroding discontent, then in all probability the mischief springs from the monotony of daily existence. More briefly, the home is a bore. The husband leaves it in the morning with pleasant anticipation, and returns to it in the evening with a sigh. Mere tedium is the explanation; and I am con-

vinced that an immense number of otherwise successful homes are fatally spoiled by tedium.

Now the origin of tedium, like the origin of nearly all the maladies from which decent homes suffer, lies in the wife. When the home is tedious it is a hundred to one that the wife is bored or discontented. One is told that the mood of the husband decides the mood of the home; but, though this dictum is true, it does not penetrate far enough into the mysteries of marriage; for the mood of the husband as a general rule answers openly to the secret mood of the wife—without the conscious knowledge of either of them.

Wives, especially if they are mature, are bored by the everlasting sameness of their days. The wonder is that more of them do not revolt. The husband has a far more diverting time. He may be worried, but he is also diverted, by his daily excursion into the world. His wits are always being sharpened, his power of observation exercised, his interests dragged out of their rut. The wife escapes only from the home into the shops. She has had a rich and overflowing dose of home by the time the husband comes back at night, critical and egotistic. The domestic evening does provide some change for the husband, but it provides none for the wife, whose very holi-

days are passed with the man whose character she knows backwards and who can offer her no novelty of companionship. So her existence proceeds—and husbands have the effrontery to hint that wives are dull! Of course they are. Cleopatra would have been dull under similar treatment and conditions. The wife's zest has withered in a vast desert of sameness.

But, it will be said, women are not the slaves they were. The taste for amusement and diversion has enormously grown. Well, it has. I admit that. Things are better than in the past, when—particularly in the provinces—the awful dailiness of life could find absolutely no relief, and ennui brooded over the land in hours of leisure like a heavy cloud. In some circles of society pleasure has developed into a mania and the picture-papers are half full of women who seem to live for pleasure alone. These women, however, are relatively few in number, and their chief social function is to rouse morbid envy in the hearts of the innumerable other women who are precluded from imitating them to the smallest extent.

I will go further and admit that the resorts and manufactories of pleasure for ordinary persons have multiplied tenfold and that they are

well patronised. But examine them, and you will see that they are patronised mainly by the youthful. Visit, for example, a dance-palace. The impression you receive is one of gaiety and the joy of life. But where are the middle-aged women? Where are the stout, plain women, the women worn by domesticity? Not there.

Yet have they not the same need of diversion as their prettier and slimmer juniors? Women do not precisely want to be stout and middle-aged. They want acutely *not* to be stout and middle-aged. And if they have been unable to avoid these calamities the fault is not theirs. Neither are they criminals. Neither is there the least justification for hiding them away as though they were dead. They are not dead. The same yearning for relaxation, change, ecstasy, in some form or other, characterises twelve stone avoirdupois at forty-five as eight stone at twenty-five. And I have no doubt at all that, on the average, the case of twelve stone and forty-five is rather a hard case, a case which suffers from lack of attention, and notably from being deprived of that which is its rightful due—not merely in regard to the form of diversion usually described as “pleasure,” but in regard to all forms of diversion, including both the instructive and the

social. The mature woman is neglected. Even the big London shops, according to their advertisements, have only just discovered that mature women and stout women exist and may conceivably be interested in clothes—their own clothes.

The blame for this state of affairs rests upon the whole of society—and especially upon that portion of it which consists of mature husbands who leave their mature wives to fend for themselves in nearly everything except material matters. And it is the husbands who are especially punished for the ill-doing. The varying charm of the house (I repeat and insist) depends on the wife. The wife cannot produce the varying charm unless her individuality is variously nourished; the husband omits to see that it is variously nourished; the home suffers.

The remedy is not difficult for the husband to apply. What the wife wants is more contacts with the world, not excepting the world of ideas. It is the lack of these that makes her dull and the home dull. Unless she is an extraordinary woman she will not get the contacts without the active interest and intervention of the husband. And amusement or pleasure contacts, though they are important and she does not obtain enough of them, are not the most important.

(Moreover pleasure contacts often involve expense which the household cannot afford.) It is the woman's intellect and intelligence which require food. She slips into a groove as the years pass. The husband leaves her there instead of cheerfully pulling her out.

How many housewives read, or if they read, take reading as other than a dope? But let a husband say to his wife: "Look here! Here's something that I've found interesting, and I think it will interest you." Watch the immediate quickening of the wife's faculties as she begins to read the book or article. It is touching. I have seen homes transformed, temporarily if not permanently, by this simple gesture.

Then there is the question of hospitalities. Hospitality need cost little or nothing, and in middle-class homes it is by no means sufficiently practised. A circle of friends means a series of stimulating contacts; it means change, variety, fresh experience of human nature, the broadening of ideas. Receiving visits is valuable; and yet more valuable, for the wife, is the returning of visits, because this involves emergence from the eternal home into a new social atmosphere. But a circle of friends is not achieved without some substantial creative effort, which the husband and the wife must share; and while the bulk

of the effort must fall to the wife, the inspiring energy for it must usually come from the husband. Tens of thousands of homes remain solitary unto themselves, like impregnable islands in the social sea, because the husband absurdly and wickedly forgets to energise the wife to the performance of those useful mind-enlarging activities for which she is fitted, but which she will not undertake save under the masculine stimulus.

There is another point. The average wife does not get enough holidays. The average husband gets a day and a half every week, besides his annual holiday. The wife's working week consists of seven days; for there is no period in the week when she can throw off the burden of house-keeping. Never at noon on Saturdays can she say like the husband, with a sigh of relief: "Well, anyway, I'm free until Monday morning." On the contrary the week-end often means far more responsibility and more work. Many wives have even to keep house during their so-called vacation, and thus obtain no real relief whatever. And so they continue without surcease for twenty years, thirty years, half a lifetime! At best the wife who always takes her vacation in the company of her husband only achieves a partial holiday. She has forever to play the wife, and in the majority of cases it is easier to play the wife

than the husband. The husband expects preferential treatment, and usually receives it. In my view much good would be accomplished if husband and wife could spend at least a portion of their holidays separately. Benefit would result, even though the devoted pair preferred to spend all the time together. For, here again, the wife's individuality would have a better opportunity of self-expression. The cultivation of the wife's individuality is assuredly one of the chief secrets of an interesting home, as in the neglect or repression of the wife's individuality is the chief explanation of the tedium of homes. I do not say that a full-blossoming wife means always a marriage of lasting agreeableness. We all know cases in which the wife's individuality has knocked the home sideways and made it into something which does not resemble heaven.

The drawbacks of the conjugal home may be, and generally are, astoundingly mysterious and complex in their causation. An encyclopædia in twenty volumes would not exhaust them, and no one but a sublime idiot would venture to put the causes into one nutshell. I go no further than the submission that the vague, never defined unsatisfactoriness which impairs the perfection of innumerable otherwise sound marriages is very frequently due to the insufficient nourishment of

the wife's individuality, and that this explanation seldom occurs to the people concerned—or to anybody else. But I certainly do not offer the explanation as containing a cure-all for the disappointingness of wedlock.



So much for the cultivation of the wife's individuality as a leading factor in conjugal success. There are other factors of great importance which it would be inconvenient or futile to discuss here, either because the delicate complexity of them would require a whole volume for this useful examination, or because, springing from the deepest roots of individual temperaments, they are unalterable in each case and therefore beyond the control of the partners. A fundamental clash of temperaments may secretly or openly devastate the union of two angels of virtue and common sense, and no ingenuity, no forbearance, no sublimity of character can prevent it. I leave these terrific topics and come to a factor which, though superficial in its nature, is nevertheless of high consequence. The human skin is superficial, but it plays no mean *rôle* in the functioning of the human body, as those whom an accident has rendered partially skinless soon discover.

I mean the factor of manners. A husband and wife in love, especially if they are young, are too apt to reject the formalities of courtesy as being artificial, irksome, unnecessary, even insincere, in such an ideal and passionate union as theirs. They imagine that soul will speak to soul, without the bother of employing those tedious tricks of phrase and gesture which mankind has invented and gradually perfected for the conduct of human relations. They imagine that they are above all that sort of thing, and that somehow all that sort of thing is a slur on intimacy, an aspersion on the genuineness of the love which binds them together.

They seem to say:

"Oh! He will understand! Oh! She won't mind. She knows what is in my soul. He cannot possibly be in any doubt as to my feelings. Why then trouble with these ceremonies and these rites, which are for persons who don't comprehend one another?"

I do not assert that all or nearly all married couples reason thus, but the evidence is abundant that a considerable proportion of them do. And never was reasoning more false and absurd.

Good manners were devised to act as a buffer between individualities in collision, and every meeting of individualities is a collision. They sof-

ten the crudity of human intercommunication. They are the buttons on the foils. They are the veil which hides certain secret places of the mind. No mind, however loving, could bear to see plainly into all the recesses of another mind. And the reader has only to lay bare his own mind in order to admit the truth of this statement. A society, whether of two or of many, is and must be organised on the basis of a thousand concealments. Good manners are a convention, and conventions are the preservatives of society. Without them blood would soon metaphorically or actually flow and the social fabric would fly apart. And further, good manners are a symbol of real or supposed good feeling. If the good feeling exists they serve hourly to illustrate it—and good feeling is effective only in so far as it is illustrated. If it doesn't exist, they in some measure take its place. At worst they cannot impair the good feeling: they always strengthen it.

So far from good manners being superfluous in extreme intimacy, they are more necessary in extreme intimacy than in mere friendship or acquaintance; because each intimate, whatever he or she may bravely pretend, is in truth extremely sensitive in his reactions to the behaviour of the other intimate. Often the sensitiveness approaches the morbid. Ill-mannered phrases and

tones remain obstinately in the memory, waiting a chance to spring up out of recollection and exasperate a difficult later moment. Again, good manners, by which I mean ceremonious good manners, are the surest preventives of outbreaks of bad temper. Bad temper needs a jumping-off place, and good manners will deprive it of a jumping-off place, whereas a breezy, curt rudeness, though founded on real affection, will provide a dozen jumping-off places in half an hour,—and though eleven of them may be refused the temptation of the twelfth may prove irresistible.

The intimates ought to watch gently but carefully over each other's manners—and their own. It is possible to be too ceremonious, but assuredly it is not easy. Even in the "solitude of two" the current code of politeness between the sexes should rarely be abandoned, and should never be abandoned for long. There are couples who leave their manners behind them in the church; there are couples who leave their manners behind them at the railway station on the return from the honeymoon; there are couples who carelessly drop them bit by bit on the stiff road through the first year of wedlock. They are all misguided, and they all ultimately pay for their negligence. "Love one another" is a prince

among marital maxims; but love is not to be maintained by vigilance alone. "Be polite to one another" (ceremoniously polite, formally polite, yes, and if advisable insincerely polite!) is also a prince among marital maxims; and politeness *is* to be maintained by vigilance; everybody can achieve it with patience and practice.

All which is no doubt platitudinous, but the value of platitudes is considerable, and some of us are inclined to ignore them.



So far I have had in mind chiefly the behaviour of the pair when they are alone together. It is not absolutely unknown in the history of the institution of marriage that husbands and wives behave incorrectly to one another in the presence of others. In so doing they are, of course, guilty of a gross breach of manners towards the others. Still, the unfortunate and reprehensible thing does occur. I would divide the bad behavers into three classes.

First, those who always indulge in friction whether they are alone or whether they are not alone. (Sometimes both parties are to blame, sometimes only one; if only one party is to blame then it is usually the same party throughout.)

The friction is almost continuous and seems to satisfy a profound need. It is usually not dangerous. It does not usually point to any deep-seated misunderstanding. It may flourish for forty years without doing serious harm. You may see married children of sixty or seventy bickering happily like the darlings of a nursery, and they are capable of expiring in a squabble. I should describe this form of naughtiness as mere ill-breeding, for which the guilty person or persons ought to be well smacked. I should not describe it as a crime against love and humanity, though it is certainly an affliction for the intimate friends of the couple, and a still worse affliction for their acquaintances, who have not been acclimatised to it and cannot appraise it at its true unimportance. If it were a grave malady and led to grave consequences somebody might set about to cure it. But being a simple mild nuisance, it is tolerated, as all sorts of mild nuisances are tolerated.

The second class of bad behavers in public consists of those who bicker in public while never bickering if they are alone. This case is more serious than the first case. It denotes that something is being constantly suppressed,—driven in, like a poison that ought to come out,

and coming out only on favourable occasions. You may say that the presence of other people scarcely constitutes a favourable occasion for a display of conjugal friction. But the fact is that in many marriages a partner who feels himself or herself aggrieved, may be so—not intimidated, but—impressed by the other partner that he or she is incapable of raising a complaint without the supporting presence of spectators. The phenomenon indeed is quite common and within the knowledge of everybody. Also, the aggrieved partner may refrain from private grumbling because he or she fears that it would lead to a tremendous “scene,” whereas the chances of a scene are immensely reduced, if not entirely destroyed, by the restraint of company.

This form of conjugal friction is intensely and specially annoying to the partner who is attacked. He (or she) is taken at a disadvantage; he cannot effectively reply; and he knows that when the company has departed again sugar would not melt in the mouth of the attacker, who after all has planted the dart and is content with that feat. Blame may nevertheless be due more to the attacked than to the attacking partner. The attacked partner is obviously the stronger, for in the nature of the affair he ex-

ercises moral sway over the attacker. It should have been his (or her) business to discover the grievance before it had begun to rankle seriously, and to deal with it somehow in privacy. A couple who rehearse their troubles to an audience are likely one day to have a strictly private performance with a catastrophe curtain. They are living dangerously over the thin crust of a chronic suppression of bad feeling.

The third class of bad behavers in public is even more grave than the second because, while it may be less unpleasant to the less thoughtful section of the public, it is symptomatic of a more serious suppression. We are all acquainted with married couples who never indulge in friction before the world, but one member of whom misses no opportunity of emitting broad and derogatory generalisations about the opposite sex. When a wife has a habit of saying: "Of course men are—" or the husband of saying: "Of course women are—" followed by fretful criticism of a whole sex, then be sure that the marriage is not proceeding smoothly, and that the critic, though apparently criticising a sex, is in reality criticising one particular specimen of that sex, the specimen whom he or she knows best and suffers most from.

This is especially true of wives. A man can generalise without in secret being personal; a woman cannot. A woman seldom or never employs a generalisation save as a cover to a personality.

Such a subtle form of public attack is the most exasperating of all. It defies a retort. Indeed to try a counter-attack is more perilous than to do nothing whatever. And its subtlety, its diabolic indirectness, its sinister cautiousness, signify not merely that the trouble is grave but that the critic has little hope of remedying the trouble. The couple, if ever at any time they practised candour, have ceased to be frank with each other. The hidden disease is none the less ugly and menacing because it is hidden. Best to call it a tumor at once and put a lancet into it. A happy sequel cannot be guaranteed to this surgery, but risk has to be taken. To shirk the risk is to invite the final disaster.



To conclude. The basis of a successful marriage is mutual affection and esteem. These are not all that is necessary to success, and a marriage may fail or half-fail when they are both present; but they are indispensable, though es-

teem without affection will sometimes procure a fair imitation of success.

The chief enemies of success in marriages in which affection and esteem are both present are first, the neglect of the wife's individuality; and, second, mistakes of deportment by one or both parties. The first matter lies principally in the hands of the husband, the second principally in the hands of the wife. A starved individuality needs nourishment, but will probably not have either the enterprise or the energy to feed itself, and if help is not given will slowly sink into a dulness more and more flat. On the other hand, in a superficial but very important matter such as deportment, the husband will usually take his cue from the wife. And at any rate she, by hypothesis, is the exemplar of the graces of existence, and should act accordingly. Unfortunately, according to my observation, wives are more apt than husbands to sin against the code of good manners. The average husband has more authority, and beyond question more actual power, than the average wife. If he feels a grievance he can often get rid of it by the exercise of authority and power. The wife's dominion is less, and it is also less direct. When a difficulty reaches its crisis, the average wife gives way—or feigns to give way. She has the more trying *rôle*

in marriage. She may not have the great worries, but she has more small worries than the husband. Her tongue is her chief weapon. I do not use this phrase in an offensive sense. I mean by it that whereas the husband can act without much arguing, the wife is bound to argue, to persuade, to cajole, to insist, nay, even to nag. She solaces herself with criticism.

And further, most women endow themselves with the right to criticise more than they are criticised. They claim sex-privileges to atone for their state of inferior economic freedom. I will not condemn them. Nor will I say that husbands as a class have fine manners in intimacy. Husbands, even the best, can be terrible. But their bad manners are, I think, less exasperating than those of wives, and less frequent. No wife will admit this in regard to herself, but nearly all wives will admit it in regard to other wives.

Wives are human; husbands not less so. It is the duty of husbands to please; the same for wives. But whereas the first duty of the husband is to support and protect, the first duty of the wife is to please. Supporting is the husband's own department. Pleasing is the wife's own department. And to please is not enough, neither for the wife nor for the husband. In addition to pleasing, it is necessary to be pleased.

VIII

CHILDREN

AN understanding of the psychology of the child is a very important thing in the equipment of parents. Most mothers pick it up quickly enough, and many of them could give lessons to professors who write books about it. An understanding of the principles of education is another very important thing in the same equipment. Very few parents ever pick it up, and consequently they educate their children, or cause them to be educated, quite badly, even absurdly, pathetically, criminally; and no nation in the world to-day has a system of education which is not largely ridiculous.

The fundamental matter, however, in the affair of rearing the next generation is neither a knowledge of child-psychology nor a knowledge of the principles of education. It is a just appreciation in the parental mind of the basis of right relations between parent and child. All other matters, be they as important as they may, are secondary to this, and must derive from it. If

the appreciation of the true basis of relations is wrong, nearly everything else is likely to be wrong.

Now in producing a child the parents are acting in accord with the promptings of nature; they are workers in the illimitable field of evolution; they are helping to carry out the vast designs of destiny. But this fact does not consciously influence their proceedings. They do not talk to each other about evolution, mother-nature, or the designs of destiny, and then add: "Therefore we must bring a child into the world."

They introduce the child to a planet of rather doubtful felicity, simply because they think it will be nice, proper, agreeable, interesting, thrilling for them to have a child in the house. They think of themselves primarily. They will even go so far as to say: "Old age without children would be awful." They do not regard the enterprise primarily from the point of view of the child. Many of them do not regard it from the point of view of the child at all. Their own satisfactions are always the first consideration, and often the sole consideration.

And yet, before the child is seven years old the parents will in all probability be remarking to the child:

"Look at all we are doing for you; we give you pretty clothes and nice food and think about your welfare day and night. You ought really to be very grateful to us. Instead of that you are naughty; you are a thankless child. The least you could do would be to show your gratitude to us by behaving well."

This attitude, I regret to have to assert, is hypocritical nonsense, and the child, if not a fool, feels that it is hypocritical nonsense and resents it as such. The child resents and despises nothing more keenly than hypocrisy, and hypocrisy is the cardinal sin of parents. Children, with all their fancy and make-believe, are ruthless and terrible realists in matters which seem important to them. Unfortunate, but not to be seriously disputed!

The baby owes nothing at all to his parents. He has no responsibilities, no duties. The parents owe everything to the baby. Their responsibility to him is complete, their duties are endless. They are most solemnly bound to use every effort to keep him in good health and happy, to build up his constitution, to fit him for the world, and to launch him upon the world. In time their responsibility lessens, but it never disappears. Whatever happens, it cannot end. If the child, grown into a man, gets ten years' imprisonment

for a vile crime, they are bound to meet him at the prison gates on his release. They made him. He is theirs, the product of their largely selfish desire to live fully. Unless they knew themselves to be unfitted to be parents they were quite right to have the child, but the price due for the privilege of parenthood is exceedingly high, and if they did not realise how high it is that was their own fault; they cannot decently avoid payment.

To return to the baby. After a short period of no responsibility and no duties, he begins to learn that he has a duty—the duty of obedience, and this is followed by the perception of other duties not only to the parents but to himself and to society. He feels the weight of the duties long before he can grasp the reasons of them. He is a fatalist. The one thing that he does deeply understand is that he is helpless under the sway of autocrats with almost unlimited power. To talk to the victim of autocracy about gratitude to the autocrats must surely be rather exasperating. Such revoltingly insincere chatter ought never to be indulged in. It can do nothing but harm.

Further, it is equally pernicious in family relations to blame the child for his wicked propensities. Reason with him about his wicked pro-

pensities; point them out to him; show him how to get the better of them; sympathise with him on being afflicted with them. But for Heaven's sake do not blame him for them. He did not choose them; he had absolutely no voice in the selection of them; he certainly did not desire them; he would much prefer to be without them. (He did not even ask to be brought into the world.) His wicked propensities have been derived from his parents, and through them, and they might just as well reproach him for being tuberculous or dyspeptic as for being a liar or greedy. The child so treated is justified in exclaiming, and doubtless does exclaim in the privacy of the subconscious to which no parent has the entrée:

"These tyrannical giants are horribly unfair. They expect me to thank them because I'm alive, and, not content with that, they condemn me for all sorts of things I can't help. I don't like it, and this world of theirs is an odiously unjust world."

In unfavourable circumstances this mood of resentment may occur at intervals for twenty or thirty years; it may occur indefinitely; it is a very bad one for everybody concerned, and the parents are primarily responsible for it. Of course, as he ripens in experience and sense the

offspring dimly and then more clearly sees that, though the parents are immediately responsible for his existence they were in fact no more and no less free agents than he is himself, and that all the generations are linked together in the net of nature, evolution and destiny, and must make the best of the predicament together; also that the best of the predicament may be a pretty fine thing. He comprehends that it was not by mere wanton caprice that his parents produced him, but in obedience to the greatest force on earth and in pursuance of an ultimate end that neither he nor they can understand.

And this comprehension is the beginning of his realisation of his responsibilities to his parents, which responsibilities may well increase while the parents' responsibilities to himself may decrease. . . . Not that the responsibilities of the offspring can ever be as serious and as binding as the original responsibilities of the parents!

To grasp the reality of the situation which I have outlined, to see it impartially, to get rid of all prejudice and all egotism in dealing with it, is the very foundation of wise parenthood.

There is something marvellous and exquisite in the spectacle of a growing child, something

which produces transport in the hearts of the parents, who are amazed at the beauty, the interest, the eternal wonder of what they have achieved. The miracle develops daily, and the development is ten thousand times more baffling and absorbing than the magic of any magician. The relations of the three are characterised by a unique tenderness, unlike any other kind of tenderness in the experience of the parents, superior perhaps in vital satisfactions to any other kind. The parents give, both from conscience and by instinct. They give magnificently, without end. The child also gives, but by instinct alone. It gives all it has. Its trust, its confidence, its conviction of safety, its generosity in affection, its bewildering variety of self-expression, its leaps from step to step of the ladder of intelligence,—all these ravish and enchant the parents. And the omnipotent protective love of the parents, its ingenuity and resourcefulness and inexhaustibleness, ravish and enchant the child. The domestic scene is pervaded by an atmosphere of soft ecstasy and devotion from which all calculation has apparently been abolished. Can anything be finer? Nothing can.

Then why do I seek to administer logic to the affair, balance the pros and cons of individual

interests, and bring down to earth that which is celestial?

Well, the trouble is that the domestic scene with a child in it is not always, nor nearly always, as I have just described it. Too often it is the very contrary. Its contrariness may be devastating, may approach the tragic. The child knows better than the other two what is wrong; but the child cannot efficiently tell what is wrong, nor can it set the wrong right. The parents alone can set the wrong right. They cannot set right without finding out what is wrong. They cannot find out what is wrong without discovering what the child's point of view is. They cannot discover what the child's point of view is without putting themselves in the place of the child and viewing the situation from precisely that spot. They cannot get there without employing logic and without a cold, hard examination of the universal motives and sentiments which are as strong in the child as in themselves.

The parents exist to teach the child, but also they must learn what the child has to teach them; and the child has a very great deal to teach them. Chiefly the child has to teach them imagination, which is the source of justice and the foe of cruelty, conscious or unconscious. Brain-

work is at least as important as heart-work in this transcendently delicate matter. And the raw material of brain-work is here the hard facts of human nature. If you ignore them justice cannot emerge; and though children are not particularly lavish in giving justice to others, they know in their secret souls what justice is, and they want a lot of it; they want more than justice. Give them less, and good-bye to smooth relations. Good-bye to making the best of the parents' lives or the best of the child's life. You may estimate that justice comes next to milk.



The child begins by being the centre round which the entire household revolves. He is the most important person in the household. Every other person is sacrificed to this great and exacting and incomprehensible and delicate person. Which is right, and nearly inevitable, for a certain period. Some parents prolong the period unduly. Indeed there are parents who prolong it indefinitely, and sacrifice their whole lives to the child, denying themselves comforts, pleasures, and even the proper cultivation of their own individualities so that the child may have the finest possible opportunities of prospering.

Such a policy on the part of parents is usually regarded as highly praiseworthy. I doubt whether it ought to be so regarded. If one life is frustrated in order that another may flourish the net gain to humanity is not very appreciable—especially when, as not infrequently happens, the second life fails to flourish according to plan. Supposing that the older generation through the centuries sacrificed itself to the younger, the result would be an eternal stultifying of mankind, and the permanent suppression of self-development. Parents should be clever enough to attend to the child's welfare and their own welfare simultaneously. If they prove incapable of this double feat they are imperfectly equipped for parenthood and deserve, not praise for lofty ideals, but censure for narrow-mindedness. Why should the child count more heavily than the parents? There is a happy mean even in parental devotion, and when it falls into extravagance it is a reproach.

The child should be shifted from his central god-like position gradually, in proportion as his perception grows. When he has acquired wit enough to know that he is the chief person in the household, then he should cease to be the chief person. Many parents keep him on the throne

in fact, while pretending to him that he is not on the throne, that indeed he is the lowliest of the lowly and of no consequence whatever. Such a course is futile and mischievous, and the more so if it comprises acts of superficial severity. Every child who is the centre of a household is soon infallibly aware of it, and no amount of assurances to the contrary, no strictness of discipline, will change the conviction and the habit of mind which necessarily springs from the conviction. He will be merely puzzled, annoyed, and alienated by the unpleasant and pain-giving attempts to repudiate the truth of that which is hourly obvious to him.

All which brings us to the great question of disciplinary strictness versus spoiling. It is a commonplace that within the last quarter of a century disciplinary strictness in the treatment of children has largely yielded to spoiling. The change is not quite a novelty, for in the memoirs of every period you will find parents saying that *they* were never spoilt as they spoil *their* children, and that discipline is going to the dogs, etc. In fact, all the usual parental lamentations! There can, however, be little doubt that the change has been very much accelerated within our own time, though perhaps less in Great Brit-

ain than in the other chief countries of the world.

I am in favour of spoiling in moderation, not only because the increase in spoiling is the result of a more scientific understanding of child psychology, but because I hold that a positive duty of parents is to make childhood happy. They have other duties, but no more important duty and no duty in which failure is more poignantly regrettable. Childhood is pre-eminently the age for happiness, and an unhappy or a tedious childhood injuriously affects the whole of life. I would sooner see a happy child than a child who never, never told a lie. And the spectacle of a bored child is not rendered less tragic to me by his marvellous attainments in industry, punctuality, cleanliness, politeness, or quadratic equations.

I admit that spoiling does not invariably result in the happiness of the spoiled. A child may be unhappy as the direct consequence of his spoiling. But such spoiling has evidently been excessive and continuous. Intermittent spoiling in a moderate degree does more good than harm. A child ought to have frequent holidays from disciplinary rules of all kinds; and I would give a child half a day a month for the free expression of his individuality. The parents should

not always be on top. They should abdicate at intervals, and resume government when sufficient damage has been done and sufficient experience acquired.

It is astounding but true that the most conscientious parents are apt to forget that their children are quite as human as themselves. What is the objection to spoiling? What lasting harm does it do? The dictionary definition of "to spoil" is to injure the character by indulgence of—spoiling. The evils attendant upon spoiling pass away at adolescence. One hears that spoilt children have bad manners. They sometimes have. For a few brief years they are capable of being a dreadful nuisance to the friends of their parents. What then? The affliction subsides as the child grows up.

Britons consider that both American and French children are spoilt. But in the sequel are the manners of American and French adults inferior to those of British adults? I think not. The frightful consequences of the most extreme and persistent spoiling are quickly curable by the method of despatching the victim to some colony to keep his end up unaided. Spoiling is a superficial matter. Besides, I would not advocate extreme spoiling. I specifically deprecate it.

What I suggest is a decent spoiling, with error, if error there is to be, in the direction of generosity.

But there is spoiling and spoiling: spoiling for the sake of the child, and spoiling for the sake of the parents. The parents may spoil a child out of sheer laziness, or from lack of faith in the power of their own individualities against the power of the child's individuality. And so they will purchase peace with dishonour, as a rich government will buy off a poverty-stricken opposing general.

"Give the kid the chocolates, for heaven's sake!" cries the exasperated and exhausted father; the mother sighs and gives. The kid munches and smiles; turmoil suddenly ceases.

"I have won," says the child to himself, even though he cannot yet talk. And he has his first glimpse into the baseness of human nature and comprehends the meaning of corruption.

This spoiling is shameful; it is shocking; it depraves the home; it suppresses trouble while preparing more trouble.

Again, parents may spoil a child from their own vanity. The child, for example, likes to show off; they are aware that it is bad for a child to show off; but they are proud of the most

wonderful infant ever born and they let him show off; nay, they encourage him to show off. This is odious, and it has the added disadvantage of boring all the friends of the household and breeding duplicity in those friends who are obliged to feign a delight which assuredly they do not feel. Often only a high state of civilisation prevents such displaying children from being murdered when they recite or sing, by adults whom their infantile performances have rendered homicidal.

But the worst kind of spoiling is that in which the parents indulge for the soothing of their consciences. Having thwarted the child for their own convenience, they are seized with remorse—not enough remorse to induce them to stop the thwarting, but enough to induce them to make some attempt “to make it up” to him. The evil is thus doubled. They will forbid the child to develop his individuality in directions which may be disagreeable or inconvenient to them personally. That is to say, they will morally imprison the child. Then they glance at the cage, and they exclaim: “This cage looks very dull. Let us gild the bars.”

And they gild the bars, and coo to the prisoner:

“See how the bars glitter. Aren’t we kind to

you? Do not say after this that we do not love you."

Is this a fanciful picture? Not at all. It is simply a description of the case, for example, in which mamma says:

"No, my dear Mary. Your father and I cannot consent to your going in for art (or medicine, or a not-rich husband, or whatever it may be); but you shall have three new frocks and more pocket-money and we will do everything to make you happy. We sincerely want you to be happy."

By which is meant:

"We want you to be happy,—in so far as your happiness does nothing to impair ours."

This is spoiling at its vilest. And it is still much practised, particularly in the most refined circles.

"The child *ought* to be happy!"

There is no more futile phrase than this. Do you suppose that the child is unhappy from naughtiness, from contrariness, or because he prefers unhappiness to happiness? Happiness cannot be a question of "ought." If a child is unhappy, for long, the sole explanation is that the parents have been either not clever enough, or not unselfish enough, to make the best of the child's

life—and therefore of their own lives. The child has to be fitted for the world, and it is necessary to employ some plan for that purpose. But the plan must be adopted to the child and not the child to the plan—within reason, of course. A child who is preponderantly unhappy is being day by day unfitted for the world, let the parental plan be as wise as it may.



In regard to the bringing up of children, there are one or two points which, although they may seem to be of minor importance, are just as universal in their application as anything before mentioned.

The first is that parents are apt to look upon their children as mysteriously “different” from other children. Every child is unique just as every adult is unique, but children do not differ from one another in the manner in which parents suppose. In salient characteristics—those characteristics with which principally parents have to deal—all children are roughly alike; and the view to the contrary is a superstition engendered by pride and anxiety in the parental mind. All schoolmasters are familiar with the parent who more or less openly wants to give special in-

structions and advice about his perfectly unique child. That kind of parent indeed is in a large majority among parents. Schoolmasters listen with what politeness they can muster to the remarks of the parent whose tone says: "At last you have got your work cut out—here is my precious child that I am confiding to you." And having listened, they callously go their own way. And schoolmasters are justified in so doing. The chances are a hundred to one that the schoolmaster knows much better than the parent how to get the best out of a given child. He knows better because his vision is quite unprejudiced, and because he has had far more experience. The parent may know something about a few children during a few years—it is a prodigy among modern parents who knows something about a dozen children!—but the schoolmaster has handled thousands of children during half or two-thirds of a lifetime. He thinks about children all day, and often the worried man has to dream about them all night; he sees all round them and through them; and in any conflict of opinion between himself and the parent, he is almost certain to be in the right.

Again, many parents wrong-headedly imagine that they can cure their children of certain traits

which all other children have and which are inconvenient to parents. They can, and often do, effect a cure, but not usefully—harmfully. Noise and restlessness in the house, for example. What can be more annoying to a truly refined and sensitive parent than a little band of shrill monsters who won't keep still? But truly refined and sensitive persons ought not to be parents. Parenthood is a job for the sturdy and insensitive. It is commonly rather a rough job. Children have to make a noise, and they have to move violently about. They have an excess of energy which must find a vent. The parent who is forever exhorting in a hushed voice: "Quietly! Quietly now!" ought to have made inquiries about the real nature of children before becoming a parent—and then decided to go into a monastery. The children of whom it is admiringly said by the parents of other children: "You never hear them," are being martyred, stunted and imprisoned.

Then there is the dreadful, the everlasting, the insatiable, the appalling inconvenient curiosity and the devilish argumentative disposition of children. Also highly troublesome to parents! A torment to parents which endures for fifteen to eighteen years at least! But children are

educated by two concurrent methods. They are educated by parents and teachers, and they are self-educated. The two methods are for the most part mutually antagonistic, but one is just as good and as necessary as the other. The curiosity and the argumentativeness constitute the child's self-education. There is nothing naughty or futile about them, nothing meet for reproach. The parent who snubs curiosity and argumentativeness is unrighteously shirking his duty for his own relief. The parent who ends an argument by the mere exercise of authority is despicable—and despicable, too, in the sight of the child. For the youngest child is well aware that a man who stands on his dignity must be a man of short moral stature. The insight of children into the psychology of parents is uncanny,—in all probability superior to the insight of parents into the psychology of children.



I should like to warn parents that even with the most enlightened efforts and the most conscientious application they will not accomplish a very great deal towards the perfecting of their imperfect children. They can implant good habits which will help in the future to protect

the child against his failings. Thus if they choose they can, in the majority of cases, implant the habit of industry,—a wonderful compensation for all sorts of defects. They can inculcate good manners. They can teach the child to think scientifically, showing him that every cause has a consequence and that every consequence has sprung from a cause. They can demonstrate to him practically that dishonesty in any form is not ultimately profitable. They can open his eyes to the endless wonder of the world. And they can foster whatever sense of humour he possesses. They can do all these things a little, and perhaps one or two of them to a considerable degree. But they cannot change, they can scarcely modify, the fundamentals of his disposition. They cannot make him strong if he is weak, nor unselfish if he is selfish, nor artistic if he has small feeling for beauty, nor cheerful if he is melancholy, nor steadfast if he is changeable and wayward, nor social if he is a solitary, nor communicative if he is reserved,—no more than they can make him lovely if he is plain.

All appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, a human infant once born is much more like marble than putty. The parents must make the best of *him*, and not repine because they cannot

transform him into somebody else. Many parents waste irrecoverable years in trying to turn children into other children instead of getting to work on that which exists before them.

Every child has an instinct of direction in life. That instinct is always in the end right for that child. Two courses are open to the parents. They may endeavour to support the child in the indicated path. Or they may endeavour to change the path, either because their prejudices or their comfort disapprove of it or because they think they know better than nature. The second course is merely idiotic.

IX

NOT FOR THE YOUNG

I WILL not fix even approximately any year in a man's life as marking the inception of middle-age. To do so might annoy at the start a number of readers whose sympathies I would like to keep as long as possible. I will merely assert that middle-age does in fact begin some time. Nobody is going to deny that. Now middle-age implies various important changes in the human machine and in the work which it can perform. Therefore the onset of middle-age is a matter which deserves our serious attention if we wish to make the best of life; for it is not enough to make the best of one-half of life; we should make the best of both halves.

"But," you cry impatiently. "Why go to meet trouble? Why anticipate age? Let us keep young. At all costs let us keep young as long as we can."

Quite. I am in favour of keeping young; but I am not in favour of being ridiculous, as so

many desperate adherents of the eternal-youth school certainly are. Nor am I sure that I understand the apparently widespread objection to age. Age has little to do with happiness. And if it does influence happiness one may safely say that the two happiest periods of human existence are childhood and middle-age. Young people are not specially happy. They have too many worries immediately in front of them; they have too much to do and too much to learn; they feel too deeply; they are too harsh, intolerant and cruel in their judgments. Numbers of men do not enjoy regular happiness until they are past fifty; and if you asked them whether they would care to return to youthfulness they would reply with an emphatic No. They know where they are. Youth seldom does. And to know just where you are is one of the foundations of happiness. Every age has its disadvantages and its compensations, which balance each other. When people exclaim to their juniors: "Oh, I wish I was young again!" they are deceitful and dishonest. They simply mean that they would like to combine all the advantages of youth with all the advantages of age, which is absurd.

Moreover, even if youth had such immense advantages as some persons imagine, you cannot

retain it by dint of urging yourself to retain it. You can pretend to retain it, and this means doing with difficulty all sorts of things which the real young do with ease; it means straining the machine and shortening the career of the machine; and it means being ridiculous in the sight of the wise.

For example, after a certain age the muscles of the eye usually cease to be what they were. The owner of the muscles is made aware of this unpleasant fact. He protests:

“No! I am not ageing. I maintain that I am as young as ever I was, and I will prove it by compelling my eye-muscles to function properly. Me wear glasses? I won’t!”

Futile obstinacy. He knows, and everybody around him knows, that he is not as young as he was. He knows, and everybody knows, that he is merely ruining his vision. Then, having perhaps tumbled over an unseen wheelbarrow, he does visit the oculist. And at first he is ashamed of his glasses, as voyagers are ashamed of being seasick—as though imperfect eyesight and sea-sickness were crimes and avoidable! At last he gets used to the glasses, which by the way enable him to see what a fool he has been.

As with eyesight, so with other functions,

physical and moral. No amount of will-power and pretence will obviate the inescapable effects of time. Time always wins, but it wins least against those who treat it respectfully and sincerely, and most against those who scorn it. Not that I am advocating an abject or too early surrender to time. Some individuals fall too easily. They allow their habits to become fixed; they become hypochondriacal and generally fussy; they seize upon the distant prospect of age as an excuse for partially abandoning the great struggle. And they are just as silly as those who will be young though they die of it. In this mighty affair of the merging of one age into another, as in all other earthly and heavenly affairs, common sense and moderation should preside over the proceedings.



It follows that a man who (as the French say) is "between two ages" owes to himself a serious duty: namely, to take stock of himself, to find out as well as he can what his resources and prospects are worth. This stock-taking must be twofold, physical and mental. (I use the word "mental" for want of a better, and I use it in the broadest sense.) Now, as I have earlier in

these essays tried to show, the basis of the total individual life is physical. The physical and the mental react on each other. But the physical has more effect on the mental than the mental on the physical. Yet the mental powers last longest. There are many historical instances of men who have retained their mental powers and enthusiasm after sixty, seventy, and even eighty years of age. Indeed the brain is such a marvellous instrument that it is capable of recovering from no matter what fatigue after a comparatively short period of repose. Whereas the physical powers definitely and incurably wane, and the force of the mental powers cannot under any circumstances preserve them. The active life of an athlete is brief. A first-rate athlete of over forty is the rarest exception. It is true that the waning of the physical powers does not seriously impair the mental if health is maintained; but at any age bad health will affect, if not the mental powers, at any rate the will to use them. It will also of course affect the mood of the mind.

Generally speaking, happiness is the consequence of health, not of righteous living and a clear conscience. The philosopher has said:

“Be good and you will be happy.”

It would be more exact to say:

“Be healthy and you will be happy.”

Bad health is far more destructive of contentment than a bad conscience. Many persons attribute to sagacity and integrity and unselfishness a state of happiness which may be due solely to a good digestion. On the other hand many persons examine their consciences for the explanation of unhappiness when they would be better employed in examining their vile bodies. And to cap all, many persons are in bad health who have not the slightest idea that they are in bad health.

Hence the first act of the great stock-taking drama should deal with the physical side. Nobody but the subject himself can decide when the stock-taking should be held. But in case of doubt sooner is better than later. Nor should the man of advancing age (by the calendar) necessarily postpone his stock-taking because he honestly feels no symptom of physical deterioration. Those who regularly play games know from other signs than weariness that fatigue is not actually felt until it has been in progress for some time. The expert at lawn-tennis who keeps on missing strokes says to himself:

“My body isn’t yet aware of the fact, but my body is tired.”

A stock-taking can do no harm, and it may do a deal of good. It may even do quite unexpected good. A man may be under the impression that he is ageing and discover at the stock-taking that the observed deterioration was due to a temporary and slight cause which can be removed.

A doctor is essential to the stock-taking, and a doctor who is capable of an exhaustive and complete examination. Not one's regular doctor, however excellent he may be. One's regular doctor will probably possess "local knowledge" which an outsider cannot pretend to; but a fresh view, unprejudiced by experience, is most desirable. Naturally both the regular attendant and the outsider may be consulted with advantage. (Nevertheless it is better not to consult them at a joint conference!)

After the physical stock-taking the subject will have some knowledge of his whereabouts in this mundane predicament that we call life. He will know what to fear and what to rely on. He will know what his limitations are, what he can safely do, and what he can only do dangerously. He will know his real physical age, as distinguished from the mere tale of his years. He may be reassured, or he may be alarmed. But even if he is alarmed, it is less disagreeable to be alarmed and

to take unpleasant precautions than to fall suddenly into a pit of whose existence he had no suspicion. Just as the wise man will visit his dentist at intervals without waiting for the tooth-ache, so the wise man in apparently good health will visit a doctor when he reaches the time of life at which he notices changes in his fellow-men. Vast numbers of us suffer from the delusion that whereas others age, we are eternally youthful. It never is so.



“More than half of my years have gone—perhaps two-thirds of them have gone. My brain is as good as ever it was, and will probably remain so for a very long time, but my energy is not and cannot be what it was, and it will gradually dwindle.”

This represents the frame of mind in which the man who would make the best of life must approach the second part—the moral part—of his stock-taking. It sounds rather solemn, and it emphatically is; but the man who cannot face solemnities in a serious spirit will not make the best of life. A cheerful optimism is not everything. It is necessary sometimes to stand up to facts and look them straight in the eye and find

out for certain whether they are pleasant or unpleasant.

You will want no doctor for this branch of stock-taking. You have to do it for yourself, though you may get a little help indirectly from friends who express their opinions without being asked and from reserved and judicious friends whose hints and apparently casual remarks have far more significance than the chatterings of those who always have inexhaustible quantities of advice to offer. But you cannot do it for yourself unless you are honest with yourself; and, except in the middle of the night, it is not easy to be honest with yourself.

The following questions have to be asked and answered:

"I am on a certain path. Where is it leading me?" We are apt to get so used to a path, so accustomed to looking only at the daily ground under our feet, that we lose sight of the direction of the path, which indeed for all we know may have ceased to have any direction at all. There are men who think they are moving straight onwards, whereas in truth they are going round and round like a traveller straying in a dark forest.

"I had ambitions. I still have them. Are they any nearer attainment than they were? Is there

a reasonable chance of my attaining them before the attainment is worthless to me?" There are men who in the intense preoccupation of the struggle lose the sense of practical possibilities, just as others lose the sense of direction. They grow blindly obstinate, and their own obstinacy is to them the dearest thing in the world. Imagine an athlete who is determined to run the hundred-yards in ten seconds. He tries and tries. He will not leave off trying. He reaches forty years of age. The ambition is perfectly hopeless, but he is still trying. A fool, of course! Plucky, persevering, but obviously a fool in the matter of his ambition! Well, there are men who in the pursuit of graver ambitions are precisely as foolish as that ageing athlete.

"I am advancing, but have I advanced as far as I expected to advance? If not, is the failure to do so due to my having expected too much or is it due to wrong methods?"

"Am I rendering reasonably happy or unreasonably unhappy the fellow creatures who share my existence?" There are men whom ambition transforms into monsters of selfishness, heartless indifference, and even cruelty; and they are convinced that ambition justifies everything. Nay, they regard themselves as the salt of the earth.

"Is my conscience clear? Nobody's conscience is clear, but is it tolerably clear? If not, what is the first step towards clearing it?"

"Am I happy? Nobody is or should be entirely happy, but am I fairly happy? If not, why not? Is it because my instincts are being continually thwarted, or because I don't make an endeavour to be happy, or because of any mortal thing whatsoever that I can influence?"

"I am far off old age, but old age is approaching daily. The terrors of old age are solitude, neglect, boredom, lack of suitable activity, utter dependence on others, and the consciousness of wasted opportunities, of having achieved less than one might have achieved. What am I doing *now* to destroy those terrors, or even to minimise them? Am I sufficiently providing for the final years? Am I keeping my old friendships in repair and constructing new ones? Am I, in the intervals of satisfying my greatest interest, creating minor interests which will serve me later? Am I digging my groove so deep that I shall never be able to climb out of it? Am I slacking?"

Plainly to ask these questions and to answer them honestly and truly involves an enormous feat of standing outside yourself and looking at yourself as though you were somebody else. But the feat must be accomplished if life is to be lived

fully. The right replies having been given, it should not be impossible to discover and apply such remedies as may be required. The man of middle-age has a tremendous advantage over the young in any crisis. He has experience.



The case of women is different, and it is very much harder.

Certain instincts are more profound and more imperious in women than in men. Women want to be admired. Men also want to be admired; at least they like being admired, but not to the same degree as women, nor for the same qualities. A woman wants to be admired for youth, beauty and charm; and she is, in fact, admired more for such qualities than for any others. If this state of affairs is wrong, the blame attaches quite as much to men as to women, to the admirers as to the admired. A man appreciates admiration chiefly of his energy, brains, and protective power. He stands as good a chance of being admired at fifty as at twenty-five—perhaps a better chance. He contemplates with comparative equanimity the onset of the years. A woman regards time as her enemy, for it steadily robs her of two of the admired qualities, and at best it impairs the third. Beyond doubt, other things

being equal, a man will turn to a woman of twenty-five rather than to a woman of thirty-five, and to a woman of thirty-five rather than to a woman of forty-five—even though the one is by miracle as attractive as the other. You may protest that this is unjust. It may be, but it is so.

The average woman will spare no pains in the daily struggle to strengthen her forces against the relentless adversary. And the apparatus which has gradually come into being to assist her is immense, complicated, and very impressive. Go into no matter what important city, and you will find in the centre of that city that the most important buildings are wholly or mainly devoted to the business of helping women to enhance their attractiveness, to appear younger than they actually are, to appear more beautiful than they actually are, and to hide or disguise the more glaring mistakes of nature. The very term "the shops" has now been specialised to mean shops for women's clothes and toilette. No other shops seriously count.

Men's tailors seldom have their establishments in main streets; they seldom attempt the slightest display. They perch themselves in side-streets, and generally they put nothing in the windows. Imagine the sensation if vast edifices dedicated to the adornment and rejuvenating of men were

suddenly to spring up in our cities, if the pavements in front of them were thronged with men eager to make the best of themselves physically, and if the advertisement columns of the daily papers were every day enlivened by huge announcements of bargains in men's attire illustrated by pictures of men posing in attitudes calculated to attract! Imagine the effect of such phenomena, and you will realise better the immensity of the *rôle* played by women's adornment in the life of an organised society,—a *rôle* approved and encouraged by almost everybody, male and female. You will realise the terrific force of the woman's desire to remain in appearance as young and as attractive as possible.

Do not suppose that this condition of things is due wholly or mainly to the woman's desire to marry, and to the fact that as women outnumber men a keen competition exists among women for men.

In the first place the relative scarcity of men is greatly exaggerated in the public mind. There are, roughly, nineteen men to every twenty women of marriageable age; the disproportion is not sufficient to account for the size and prosperity of "the shops." I grant that women are more anxious to marry than men, but that is not really an argument against my position, because the de-

sire to seem young and beautiful persists intensely in a woman after she has obtained all the man she desires. The strange and wonderful condition of things is due to an elemental and unchangeable ordinance of nature; and it requires no other justification.

The ordinance is so influential that women will sometimes continue to obey it to the best of their ability when obedience to it becomes not merely futile but tragic. Look at that wrinkled lady whose face is covered thick with rouge and powder and heaven knows what; look at her absurdly youthful costume; watch her imitation of a youthful walk. The spectacle is terrible. What is she hoping for? I will tell you what she is hoping for. She is hoping that seen at a little distance she may be mistaken during two seconds—two seconds—for a woman half her age. And to win those two seconds of attention and admiration she will spend hours of ingenious and expert toil. Such is the astounding dominion of a basic instinct.

The instance is of course extreme. But the majority of women go down into middle-age fighting to keep that which they know they cannot keep. In this matter the supreme symbol of womanhood is the *danseuse*. She is admired, wooed, fêted, spoilt, applauded, worshipped. But

within her heart is the cankerous knowledge that beyond a certain age she cannot dance in public and will not be allowed to dance, and that the time is surely coming when she will cease utterly to get applause, and none but a few faithful friends will look twice at her save in pity, and that she will be reduced to teaching others younger and more beautiful than herself to take the place which she once held.

Nevertheless the fate of the average woman need not be pictured in colours too dark. We do not in fact see ladies over forty going about in weeds for their departed physical charms, or weeping softly in motor-buses because the sight of them will never again brighten the raiding eye of unknown men. Somehow or other they do accustom themselves to their changed situation in the regard of the curious world, and they do find compensations which in a greater or less degree reconcile them to the permanent loss of very precious satisfactions. This is notorious and within the knowledge of everybody. At the same time let us not dismiss a grave matter too lightly, nor ignore the fact that in certain instances a woman's arrival into middle-age is a tremendous tragedy from which she never during the rest of her life fully recovers. Let us note also that men are generally far too indifferent to the scarcely-

spoken sufferings of women whose mirrors tell them awful truths—messages reinforced by the casual disdainful glances of passers-by in the street.

How shall a woman contrive without secret disaster to cross the bridge between the period of physical attractiveness and the second and unexciting period of her existence?

We can reach the answer to the question by enquiring into the case of the woman to whom the years bring tragedy. Such a woman has lived for admiration; she has depended on admiration and depended on nothing else. She has, in practice, assumed that the qualities which gave her power and joy would last for ever. She has done worse than, in the ordinary sense, live on her capital. She has lived on a sort of treacherous capital which, besides producing no interest whatever, was steadily falling into utter valuelessness. She has based her claim to the affection and attention of society exclusively upon the perishable part of herself. She has been content to receive without giving because society was ready to give without receiving. She has permitted herself to be spoilt. She has presumed upon the present. She has put all her eggs into one basket. She has refused to learn from the universal experience of other women. She has

shut her ears to the approaching footsteps of the future. She has persisted too long in the pretence that things are not what they are. She has believed in miracles. . . . There are no miracles. . . . The unequal fight is protracted but it has an end. Defeated, she looks round for a support. But every human being has to provide his own support in the supreme moral crises, and she has provided none. Her life is over, and her doom is to go on living, if only in the semblance of an old malicious cat.

The case is fortunately exceptional, though by no means extremely rare. The average woman has some sense, and either out of the kindness of her nature or out of mere self-interest she starts in time to insure herself against total loss. She discounts the worst kind of admiration and seeks to cultivate the better kind. She is not content to *be*; she sets forth on a course of *doing*. If she pleases without effort, she realises that the ability to please without effort is transient, and she learns a new and lasting ability. She creates interests for herself which are independent of time. She provides against the advent of the lean years. She makes herself indispensable to some individual or group of individuals. She comprehends that time cannot wither the fruit of a kind smile, and that unselfishness and devotion exercise an en-

chantment that nothing can impair. She tries to please. It is an endeavour that, honestly made, cannot fail. For the desire to be pleased she substitutes the desire to give pleasure. As fast as she loses ground on one side she gains ground on another side. She treats the future with respect, as one respects a formidable enemy. She defies time by the sole method by which time can be defied successfully,—by pitting against it those powers of mind and heart that are as immune from its touch as gold is immune from rust. She may not do these wonderful things consciously, or quite selfishly, or quite unselfishly, or perfectly, or according to a prearranged plan; but she somehow does them.

The result is not always, is very seldom, entirely satisfactory to the feminine part of her, but it is as satisfactory as most results are in this interesting and inexplicable world. Without women of middle-age the said world would be much more lugubrious than it actually is.

Many women need not take stock on the man's scale or at his period. They marry, have children; their way of life is appointed for them, and they cannot alter it. What is more, they have little desire to alter it. Their existence is full; they are interested, even absorbed; and they have as much happiness as destiny has decided to

vouchsafe to the average individual. But they can rarely avoid stock-taking in the end. For children grow up and depart, and although the children usually display a forbearing anxiety about their mothers they do not usually make any serious attempt to fill the gap which their departure has created. The mother must therefore take stock in time of her relations with her children's father, who too often until it is too late is treated as a mere inevitable but no-longer-necessary human adjunct. She must also take stock of her own provision for filling the gap. Of course grandchildren may partially fill it, but grandchildren are not so sure as they were.

A woman of fifty or sixty may wake up one morning to discover that she has nothing, or not enough, to live for, because when the present absorbed her she yielded too fully to its attraction and forgot the future. She is bored. Boredom is generally a fatal disease, and has killed more middle-aged people than phlebitis, bronchitis or arthritis.

Other women, the women who seem likely to have to depend exclusively on their own resources for the zest of life, must take stock earlier than men—much earlier, for they mature and fade earlier, and their direction is taken earlier. A

single woman who leaves her stock-taking till forty may have left it too late.

A professional woman must examine realistically what her prospects are, and she must satisfy herself that her profession will not ultimately disappoint her, filling her with regrets instead of with satisfactions. Few women stay in love with a profession. Most of them love a profession violently for a while, and then passion turns to hatred.

The single woman with private means is menaced with dreadful dangers. You can see her wandering all over the continent of Europe trying to evade those dangers and not succeeding, because they cannot be evaded by flight. They can only be defeated in a straight fight by dint of cultivating every feminine attribute that the situation has left available to her. 'The European hotels are largely inhabited by secret tragedies due to early negligence in taking stock.

The single woman who is absolutely dependent for food, clothes, and shelter on the life or the whim of another being is in the worst pass of all. She may indeed be so helpless that she has no stock to take. But such women ought not to exist and their mere existence is a reproach to those who had charge of their youth.

X

BEING INTERESTED IN THE COMMUNITY

THE other morning in the street I overheard a young man saying violently to a companion;

“It’s every one for himself in this world, and I tell you straight I shall—”

As I couldn’t stand still and listen I didn’t catch what dreadful thing the young man intended to do, but he had said enough to show me that the truth was not in him and that he was set on making the worst of life while vainly hoping to make the best of it.

The young man, representative of a whole school of social philosophy, lacked faith in human nature and in the friendliness of mankind. He was enjoying all the rights and privileges of an organised community, and yet had not realised that if his own theory had been generally practised, no organised society could ever have come into existence and we should still be savagely clubbing one another in the primeval landscape.

Of course he wanted all his rights and privileges to continue, and at the same time he wanted to be free himself to act just as though the community did not exist. His attitude towards society was all wrong, and his estimate of the average man was all wrong. Doubtless he was of an immensely selfish disposition. Doubtless also he had been through some unfortunate experience which had led to the discovery that human nature is not yet absolutely perfect, and which had distorted his vision.

Nothing is more fatal to the quest for earthly happiness than a general antipathy to, and contempt for, one's fellow-creatures. And nothing can be more unjust, nor more conceited. Your average fellow-creature is a very decent person, inspired by a fair amount of kindliness and a quite active conscience and sense of duty. Your average fellow-creature is not always thinking of himself and fighting for his own hand. He thinks constantly of the community and constantly curbs his desires in the interests of the community—which interests, by the way, he has wisdom enough to see are ultimately his own interests.

How do I know all this? What reasons have I for such an optimistic conclusion concerning the average man?

The answer to these questions is that the community, with all its enormous admitted advantages, could not have come into being, and could not be maintained, if the average member of it were not a very decent person with a sense of duty and plenty of self-control and an instinct to play the game and a certain readiness for self-sacrifice. If the average member of society were the individualistic beast of prey that my young man made him out to be, the community, could it by some miracle ever have been created, would infallibly fly to pieces in about a fortnight. The measure of the average person is the community of which he forms part. If some justice and some security and some comfort prevail steadily in the community, then the average person in it is not an individual to be despised or detested or even sneezed at. He deserves to be liked and to be respected. And those who do not like or respect him are either ungrateful, or wicked, or ill, or self-centred coxcombs, or mere idiots. This is sure.

No one can live even fairly comfortably, not to say happily, who is at loggerheads with the community surrounding him. Such a state of antagonism, if it exists at all, is usually continuous, and it directly or indirectly affects every rela-

tion. It is like a permanent state of war. It is like the ceaseless slight poisoning of the body from some cause whose irritating activity never slackens. It is like the operation of a deep grudge. It amounts to an indictment of mankind. It means that in your opinion all mankind is wrong and you are right, and heaven has for some reason or other singled *you* out to be the sole repository of wisdom. It makes you self-righteous, and here in my view is the very worst of it. Self-righteousness is an affliction of the deadliest kind. (Fortunately it is not catching, though acutely painful to the closer companions of the sufferer.) It is the greatest producer of social friction on earth. It is one of the greatest obstacles to real success in life. It is the foe of genuine felicity. It may appear to be agreeable to the sufferer; but it is not in fact agreeable, because, while naturally delighted with his own marvellous superiority, the poor fellow is worried to death by the stupidity and ignorance of the rest of the race and by the impossibility of lifting them up to his own level. At intervals also he is visited by the horrid suspicion that he is an ass in the eyes of the world, which he certainly is.

It is nearly as important—I would go further

and say that it is quite as important—that a man should live at inward peace with human nature at large as with the human nature of his own family and household. He is not bound to agree completely with the standards and practices of other people, but he is bound to admit in all friendliness and modesty that they are on the average just as well-intentioned as himself and not more sinful than himself. He is bound not to despise nor hate. He is bound to be charitable. He is bound to dispose himself, so far as he possibly can, to love his fellow-creatures. He is bound at any rate not to repudiate them. He is bound to discipline himself with the frequent reflection: “After all, who am I?” And he must remember that to no matter what extent the standards and practices of the community fall short of his own unique ideals, the community is human and he is human.

He must say:

“This is what human nature is; and I am part of it.”

Some persons, too many persons, pass their lives in being astonished at the imperfections of human nature. They get up every morning, and every morning are pained and shocked afresh by the same old manifestations of the humanity in

us. They refuse to believe that human nature is what it obviously is, and they persist in blaming it and detesting it and scorning it for not being about a hundred per cent. better than it is. And they die in the same state of grieved amazement.

Or, if they accept human nature, they accept it cynically, as a bad joke, as a personal trial for themselves, as something utterly inexplicable and deplorable.

They seem to say:

"It would be tragic if it wasn't so funny."

They never get used to the earth, and never cease from making a high-brow fuss because earth is not heaven. They habitually, instead of thinking the best of people, think the worst. If they hear a bad account of an individual with whom they are unacquainted they will, on making his acquaintance, view him in the light of that account. They will have nothing to do with one of the wisest of old maxims: "Take people as *you* find them,"—not as others find them. They assume that humanity is guilty until it is proved innocent, instead of assuming it to be innocent until it is proved guilty. They prosecute and they also sit on the bench and deliver judgment.

All this is very silly, narrow-minded, and intolerant of them; and further, it is extremely

prejudicial to themselves. It sours their lives and ruins their judgment. And it has no beneficial effect on human nature, which will blandly follow its own course, like a river that a dog barks at.

I do not assert that the pure type which I have attempted to describe is numerously represented among us, though heaven knows there are more than enough of it. The significant point is that we all of us in a greater or less degree partake of that regrettable type. The ridiculous self-sufficient prig lurks in all of us, a dangerous microbe. And it behooves us to keep a careful eye on him and crush him vigorously at short intervals. Otherwise he is capable of undoing most of the improvements in ourselves achieved by our high aspirations and our desperate struggles towards the light.

Further. Not to live in a real accord of esteem, friendship, and understanding with your community is fundamentally wrong because it is fundamentally unnatural. Your case may, of course, be exceptional, but the chances are a thousand to one that you are yourself of the very blood of the community. Hundreds, thousands of the people you see in the street have the same blood as yours in their veins. Go far enough back and you will find common stock. Your tra-

ditions are the same. You were nourished in the same ideas. You have the same climate. You are accustomed to the same sights. You suffer under the same disabilities and enjoy the same advantages. You are all moving together in the same stage of the same evolution. Compared to these tremendous similarities, differences of temperament, brain and education are slight—as you always discover when a foreigner or a stranger of any kind arrives on the scene.

And it is almost certain that you yourself have many of the faults which you complain of in the community. After all, the community is not to blame for not being perfect. It is fulfilling the decrees of destiny and pushing forward to the poor best of its ability. As for you, so for the community, life is rather hard and still more disappointing, the eternal purpose being singularly mysterious and difficult of comprehension. And anyway you are just as responsible as anybody else for the community. You cannot honestly wash your hands of it.

Here I want to insist that this bond which I am indicating includes not merely your own circle but the whole of the self-governing community. Many people who are conscientiously loyal to their own circle repudiate the community. To a

certain extent we all do so. And to that extent we are all wrong. Indeed, I should put this too frequent neglect of the community as a whole among the worst of our social sins, among the sins which in the end do the most to impede the progress of mankind. And that it reacts unfavourably on one's individual existence cannot be doubted. I should like to know what would be the result if we all repudiated, neglected and despised the community as some of us do. One result would assuredly be that the community as a community would fall into a decline and cease to be.

I willingly admit that you may have been unfortunate. You may have been born too soon. It may well be that you would have felt more at home a thousand years hence, after the community had had ten centuries in which to improve itself up to your level. And what then? What are you going to do about it? Bear a grudge against the eternal purpose? Don't attempt it. Nothing could be more absurd. Abnormally great and wise though you may be, the eternal purpose will beat you if you cross it. Accept it. Fall in with it. Go further and you will fare worse. Your natural community is the community for you, and the more you study it

and the better you understand it, the more comfortable you will be. Also, if you are so much superior to your environment, is not your duty all the more plain and urgent to do what you can to ameliorate your environment? This brings me to the second and complementary part of community life.



The fact is that one of the chief reasons, if not the chief reason, for your dissatisfaction with our poor common humanity as shown in the life of the community is that you and people like you take no part in it. You criticise it harshly enough, but you leave it alone. Which is either very illogical of you or very selfish. Why do you adopt this harmful attitude? I call the attitude harmful because your abstention leaves the field of public activity open to a certain number of persons who see a chance of exploiting the corporate life for their own advantage. That this exploitation does occur is notorious, and it is equally notorious that the extent of the exploitation increases with the abstention of decent and enlightened members of the community.

Well, you do not abstain from mere sloth, nor often from a conviction that you are unsuited to

public tasks. You abstain partly because you have insufficient genuine faith in mankind and partly because you are frightened by the hugeness of the business of reform and improvement.

If, however, you lack faith, the reason is that you are uneducated, you are ignorant of history, which is one long demonstration of the power of communities to improve. I doubt if the community in which you live is more imperfect than you yourself admit yourself to be in your moments of impartial self-examination. Yet it is the rarest thing for you to lose faith in yourself; nor does the awful multiplicity of your failings prevent you from continually making good resolutions and continually trying to put them into practice.

If every member of the community actively set himself to improve the community the community would improve. But even so it would not improve rapidly. The big movements are slow movements. The movements which produce lasting effects are slow movements. And also they are complicated movements made up of a million or so smaller movements. Results in improvement are got by people who have not only faith but patience, and who are content to do one thing,

and generally one little thing, at a time. It happens to many of us to throw ourselves into a movement of reform or good deeds and then to abandon it because we have not brought about the millennium in six months or six years.

"Mankind is incorrigible," we say. "There is no doing anything with it. Here have I honestly and energetically put my back into this movement, and I've been thwarted by idiots and scoundrels at every turn and things are as bad as ever. I shall retire."

But mankind is not incorrigible. There is something to be done with it. We have not been quite thwarted at quite every turn. Things are not as bad as ever. And we have no right to retire. We have merely the right to be patient and persevering and not to behave like an impulsive infant.

No corner of the field is too small to occupy. No effort is too humble to produce an effect worth producing. No effort is wasted. And there will never be any millennium, you know! The millennium is a chimera. A millennium involves perfection. A hundred centuries hence the citizens of those days-to-come, regarding us of the twentieth century somewhat as we regard the inhabitants of the stone age, will still be yearning towards the millennium and still be shocked by the

scandalous imperfections of their humanity and the inefficiency of their communities. There can be no finality except death. The dream of a millennium is a device of nature's, and a very effective and agreeable device, for encouraging us to be persistent.



Some of us with unquiet consciences would like to do something for the community, but we are held back by a too narrow conception of what public work is. When we think of public work we think of electioneering, speechifying, canvassing, campaigning, conspiring, lobbying, and a general prominence in the local newspaper. And we say to ourselves, no doubt quite truly, that we could never stand that sort of thing even if we had the capacity to take a hand in it.

But "that sort of thing," though important enough and absolutely essential to the functioning of any community which in any degree governs itself, is not the only sort of thing. Everybody who helps in the education, or the pleasures, or the charities, or the religions, or the arts of a community engages in public work. Everybody who does anything from an unselfish motive and at personal inconvenience for the betterment of the community or a part of the community, in

any matter however small, engages in public work. And there is more than enough public work to employ everybody who desires to help. Even apart from urgent work which no one has yet thought of beginning, there is more than enough public work actually begun to satisfy the appetites of the most energetic. A very little inquiry will show that organisations exist everywhere for leaving the world better than they found it, and that nearly all of them are hampered by a lack of working adherents. The difficulty is not to find scope for activity; the difficulty is to choose among many scopes and to choose wisely.

And a still greater difficulty is to go to work in the right spirit. We are apt to start too complacently as though the mantles of all the prophets had descended upon us and we were the first persons that ever had dedicated ourselves to public work. We are apt also to start too uncompromisingly. We have our principles and we cannot recede from them. We will sacrifice everything, our leisure, our health, our peace of mind; but not our principles. Principles are sacred, etc. This would be a grand theory if our own principles were the only principles in the world. But everybody has principles, and, when you examine them, the principles of no two persons are

exactly alike. Hence, if everybody was as rigid as ourselves, public work would have to be done by a vast number of separate organisations, and each organisation would consist of just one individual and no more. Hence also there is a chance that our own principles may not be the final word of all wisdom. Be it known to all inexperienced enthusiasts for bettering the world that compromise is of the very essence of such work,—yes, compromise even on principles, which no more than anything else are exempt from criticism and continual modification.

Another pit into which the tyro is liable to fall is what I will term the “simplicity delusion”—usually accompanied by the “sole-remedy delusion.”

“My dear fellow, it’s so simple. I can show it you on half a sheet of paper. If you will only give it a moment’s thought. The thing to be done is X (X being the beloved nostrum). Neglect X and you will come to naught. Do X and everything will be all right.”

To which earnest nonsense the reply is that no public problem is simple—far from it, and that there is no simple cure for any public ill, and that those devoted public workers who put their faith in a simple remedy for a simple ill are in serious danger of becoming public nuisances.

There are three reasons why it is essential to right living that we should enter into some form of work on behalf of the community. The first is that such work is an antidote to that besetting selfishness of outlook, attitude, and activity which is common to nearly all of us, and which is perhaps the chief cause of all our discontent and unhappiness: a superlative corrective for that maxim, at once fatal and absurd, that "it's every one for himself in this world."

Any person made miserable by his own disappointments and woes can prove the truth of what I say by going straight off and doing something for somebody else without any expectation of advantage to himself. He will immediately feel better; his glance will be brighter; his courage will be increased; and his view of the entire world will be altered. This is a certainty. It is a certainty which may conceivably annoy thousands of people who, like myself, have no use for priggishness, self-righteousness, and the sensation which boys and girls contemptuously describe as "pi." It may set their teeth on edge like the sound of scratching on a slate. But a certainty it is. And you will never get away from it. Forget yourself; think of others; and you will benefit yourself. So that if you find any comfortable anti-"pi" satis-

faction in so doing, you can assert that all unselfishness is really selfishness at bottom. It may be. The question has been discussed for thousands of years and it is not yet settled and never will be settled.

You may object that a man who, for example, is working for his family, practises all the unselfishness that ought to be demanded from a human being. I do not agree. The family is a unit of which the breadwinner is the core, and in working for the family he is working for himself and for something which he primarily originated for the satisfying of his own instincts. There is an egotism of the family which may be as hard and fierce as a purely personal egotism. Self-sacrifice on behalf of one's family may be altruism, but it is an altruism within an enlarged egotism. And it is not enough. The community is a bigger thing than the family, as the late war proved, and the need of the family is not an excuse for neglecting the community.

The second reason is that the work for the community, in addition to constituting a valuable moral exercise and discipline, is directly and unmistakably advantageous to ourselves. Not merely does it tend to improve the community, with agreeable consequences to the members of the community, but it tends to improve the commu-

nity in the particular manner in which we personally desire it to be improved. And in addition it necessarily enlarges our knowledge of mankind. Everybody who indulges in public work must meet people, and all kinds of people, whom otherwise he never would meet. His acquaintance is multiplied, and he may even make new and precious friends; his perspective is corrected; he sees things in new lights; his powers of diplomacy are brought into play; and above all he learns the deep practical truth that it takes all sorts to make a world. In a sentence, public activity, however humble, educates the worker as nothing else can; it completes his education, in so far as education can be completed; it is the "finishing school" of life.

The third reason is an amplification of the second,—the second perceived in a broader aspect. Work for the community is the best of all safeguards against the temptation to *avoid* life. Clearly if you avoid life you cannot make the best of life. Life is admittedly difficult; if it wasn't it would only be a sort of death. There is no sense in actually creating difficulties; but equally there is no sense in running away from difficulties which exist. To do so would be as wise as to cut your legs off because walking gives you corns. You would have no more corns, but also you would

have no more walking, and you would be vastly less alive than if you had fairly faced the corn difficulty instead of stumbling away from it on your mutilated stumps.

People encumber this earth who, having experienced the difficulties and complexities of existence, are determined to have as few of them as possible. Marry? Certainly not. Marriage is packed with trouble. Therefore they remain single. Own property? Certainly not. The property-owner is the martyr of society. His troubles range from the plumber to the tax-collector. Therefore they will own nothing. Rent a house? Certainly not. Consider the servant difficulty alone! Therefore they will not rent a house. Collect intimate friends? Certainly not. It involves you in the most tiresome complications. You have to make allowances for the friends' individualities, to accept hospitality and to give hospitality in return. Therefore they confine themselves to acquaintances. They live in hotels or furnished service-flats; they obtain books from a lending-library; they join a golf-club; they hire a car by the half-day. And thus they avoid every difficulty and complication. Their sole trouble is that they are the most melancholy and bored individuals on the face of the landscape because from cowardice or sloth they

are avoiding life. They have simplified life. True! But they have knocked it senseless too.

To live wisely is to live fully, to live with all your faculties, to live all the time, to feel deeply and variously, and always—up to a given age—to find the day a trifle too short for the day's doings. It is better to have too many interests than too few. It is better to be worried to death than to die in the sleep of boredom. Not that I am advocating any form of de cease, and I should seriously object to being worried to death. Worry in excess is a crime on the part of the person who permits himself to be worried. Worry is a form of friction. The task of the expert in life is to run his machine with the maximum of activity and the minimum of friction. If he stops or slows the machine because he cannot otherwise deal with the friction, then life has beaten him. The general human tendency is to stop friction by partially stopping the machine—especially after what is loosely called “success” has been attained. Real success in life is the full, smooth-running exploitation of the whole machine with daily satisfaction to the mechanic. And nothing else is real success in life.

THE END

